Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-EIGHT • NUMBER TWO • AUGUST 1994

Why Religion Is Good for the Jews
Irving Kristol

Partial Justice
Mary Ann Glendon

Naipaul's World
Philip Gourevitch

One Down—A Story
Allegra Goodman

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The Fuehrer's Filmmaker
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"Newsweek" Discovers Virtue
Midge Decter

Conservatism & Big Government: An Exchange
William Kristol / Newt Gingrich / Paul M. Weyrich /
Samuel Lipman / David Frum & Others

Books in Review: Arturo J. Cruz, Jr. and Consuelo Cruz Sequeira /
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Conservatism & Big Government

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It's hard not to like David Frum ["It's Big Government, Stupid," June]. At a time when American conservatives are endlessly hectored to be tolerant, inclusive, and caring, Mr. Frum counsels us to be tough-minded, discriminating, and willing to tell unpalatable truths. Mr. Frum wants us to feel less of each other's pain, and to recognize more of our own (and others') responsibility. Above all, he wants American conservatism to repudiate Big Government, root and branch.

I agree with much of Mr. Frum's argument. A revival of limited government—a politics of liberty—is necessary to our future well-being, though not so sufficient to it as Mr. Frum sometimes suggests. But the fact is that American conservatism—and even the Republican party—*is* increasingly uniting against Big Government. Mr. Frum's unpalatable truths are rapidly becoming more palatable than he acknowledges. This is so not because Americans have suddenly read Hayek or Madison (though we of course should). It is because, as a rather more cheerful conservative theorist, Rush Limbaugh, has put it—indeed, this is Truth No. 4 of his "35 New Undeniable Truths"—"Evidence refutes liberalism."

Big-Government liberalism has failed. The American people know it has failed. Now it is, of course, harder to unwind Big Government than it was to create it, because of the patterns of dependency that have developed and the problem that no one wants to yield benefits first. But it is clear, I think, in phenomena ranging from H. Ross Perot to term limits to the near-passage of the Penny-Kasich budget cuts, that popular support increasingly exists for an assault on Big Government. And conservative politicians will eventually catch up with public opinion.

Another way of saying this is to say that the rather simple message of Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign—that government is far more part of the problem than of the solution—has even more resonance today than it did then. In fact, in 1980 the anti-government aspect of Reagan's message was politically not the strongest part: that's why tax cuts came first, and why there turned out to be no real support for, say, scrapping, or even substantially cutting, the Department of Education. A little bold leadership over the next two years could create a situation, I believe, in which Reagan '80—or even Reagan '76, with its radical platform of devolution of power to communities and citizens—becomes the prototype for the '96 campaign, and for conservative governance thereafter.

Now Reagan '80 may not be enough for Mr. Frum, who yearns after Goldwater '64. But Reagan '80 was successful because it appealed to a "vision," as we say, a vision beyond simple opposition to Big Government. After all, America's greatness depends on more than cutting Big Government. It is true that it does depend, first, on cutting or relimiting government according to the principles of a traditionally liberal society. Doing even this will require considerable political creativity and boldness—for, as Mr. Frum acknowledges, many of the traps of welfare-state liberalism "cannot be escaped through the same route" by which they were entered. Because Mr. Frum is too despairing about what has already been accomplished, he is, in a sense, too unambitious about what is now needed: it is not merely a matter of conservative intellectuals "telling unpalatable truths"; it is a matter of figuring out how to effectuate politically viable and tough-minded strategies that can liberate us from an entrenched welfare state.

Even this liberation will not, by itself, bring all the benefits Mr. Frum suggests, for he exaggerates the centrality of Big Government to our social and moral woes. If he is right to chide "cultural conservatives" for ignoring the role of the state, he overstates the causal relationship between Big Government and the ills of our civil society. Mr. Frum is persuasive on the way the "feedback effects" of the welfare state do damage to civil society; but what of the devastating "feedback effects" of modern ways of thinking, and living, on the "bourgeois virtues"? The message of Reagan and Goldwater does not need simply to be reasserted; it needs to be deepened. For our task of social reconstruction is great, and requires more than a revival of the

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old hostility to Big Government. What is needed is a new (and more strategic) hostility to Big Government—and, beyond that, a fundamental challenge to the intellectual and moral climate that has sustained it (and been sustained by it) for much of this century.

WILLIAM KRISTOL
Project for the Republican Future
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Frum's article is right in its strategic analysis of Big Government, but behind the times in reporting on Republican "failures." He seems unaware of the dramatic steps House Republicans have taken and are taking to shrink government and replace the welfare state.

In 1993, John Kasich led House Republicans in offering a budget alternative which cut $431.6 billion out of Big Government and ended or reduced 144 programs.

Late in 1993, House Republicans voted for the Penny-Kasich spending-cut proposal to eliminate or reduce 71 programs and cut $90.3 billion in spending.

This year, House Republicans offered a budget alternative which cut $280.8 billion from Big Government.

The House Republican welfare reform saves $20 billion over five years and moves decisively toward work and family requirements for welfare. I support the proposal of Massachusetts governor, William Weld, who calls for a maximum 60-day transition period for welfare and then a mandatory work requirement. I also support Governors Engler (Michigan) and Thompson (Wisconsin) in their workfare and learnfare reforms.

On September 27, Republican candidates for the House will gather on the Capitol steps to pledge to implement a checklist for opening day and a contract for ten bills to be voted on in the first 90 days of the session.

If a majority of Republicans is elected to the House for the first time in 42 years (Democratic monopoly of power has produced higher taxes, bigger government, more pork, and more patronage to keep the monopoly), on the opening day we will pass the Shays Act to make Congress obey the same laws as everyone else and we will cut the number of congressional committees and cut committee staffs by at least 33 percent to prove that we understand government is too big and spends too much. We want to balance the budget by cutting spending, not by raising taxes.

Our contract for ten bills will include welfare reform, health reform, litigation reform . . . , reducing unfunded mandates, downsizing bureaucracy, cutting regulations, applying cost-benefit analysis to environmental policy, eliminating the marriage penalty in the tax code, and cutting capital gains and other taxes to stimulate economic growth in the private sector. All these steps move us toward Mr. Frum's smaller government.

In every speech I assert that we must replace the welfare state. As a historian, I argue that American civilization cannot survive with twelve-year-olds having babies, fifteen-year-olds shooting one another, seventeen-year-olds dying of AIDS, and eighteen-year-olds graduating with diplomas they cannot read.

I have taught a twenty-hour course entitled "Renewing American Civilization" at Kennesaw State College and now at Reinhardt College. This course outlines the principles for replacing the welfare state by returning to the key strengths of American civilization (readers can call 1-800-TO-RENEW to get the audiotape or videotape version).

I taught the course (and I will again in January 1995) because the concept of replacing the welfare state is too complex to be explored in nine-second sound bites. It takes about twenty hours to begin to develop an approach to renewing American civilization with small government, more civic responsibility, more cultural reliance on personal strength, family, and community, and more free enterprise.

Some of the steps renewing American civilization that I outline in the course include:

- Understanding the legitimate desires of the American people. In the end, it is the hopes, dreams, energy, and courage of the American people that will save America.
- Realizing that the welfare state's bureaucracies, laws, and attitudes are at the heart of American decay, not random accident or bad luck. This decay is the product of a generation of bad laws, bad bureaucracies, and destructive attitudes.
- Finding the potential inherent for renewing American civilization by simply reapplying the

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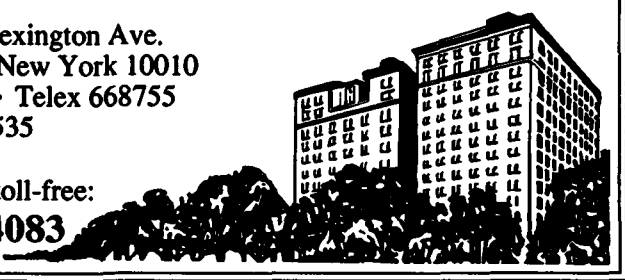

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great principles which have worked for over 200 years: personal strength, quality, technological progress, entrepreneurial free enterprise, and the lessons of American history.

• Communicating our understanding of the American people's desires and our ability to help them achieve those desires by replacing the welfare state with the five pillars of freedom and progress cited above.

All House Republicans share this mission to reestablish the potential for explosive improvements in creativity and productivity by a combination of the right values, the right attitudes, the right laws, and the right systems, so Americans can in fact live in the America they dream of and pursue happiness each in his own way.

I hope David Frum and your readers will decide to do more than analyze. I hope they will join House Republicans in getting to smaller government by replacing the welfare state.

NEWT GINGRICH
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Frum makes a solid case against Big Government. There is no question that government subsidies in the form of welfare have encouraged illegitimacy, and that similar subsidies to universities have fueled their descent from learning into ideology. Cutting off those subsidies is a good idea and conservatives should support it.

So why doesn't it happen? And why don't conservatives make fighting Big Government their rallying cry any more? The answer points to the flaw in Mr. Frum's argument: because the culture has weakened to the point where society can no longer make moral decisions, and most conservatives know that.

Toward the end of his article, Mr. Frum states: "Conservatism . . . was always a doctrine for the tough-minded." There's the rub. For a society to be "tough-minded," it has to have a value system with some content—not just a maudlin sentimentality, which is about all this society (or its governing elite) has left. The elite has bought a system of values in which actions like cutting off subsidies to single mothers and mad professors are quickly labeled "cruel," "intolerant," "mean-spirited," etc. And with that message dinned into the ears of the public day after day through television, the majority, though not always agreeing, is nonetheless cowed. It has come to view its own healthy moral impulses, like thinking Singapore is right in caning vandals, as somehow wrong.

So while the welfare state has cultural effects, it also has cultural roots. This is the point cultural conservatives have been making for some time: when the culture collapses, it takes everything else with it. Sure we should cut back Big Government, restore a genuine free market, reduce the deficit, and so on. But how do conservatives, or anyone else, compel moral actions by a society that has lost its moral compass? The quest is naive at best, and futile; at worst, it suggests a very unconservative view of society as a mechanism and people as just so many calculators, good Benthamites responding rationally to this or that economic stimulus. Poppycock.

Single young women do not have babies in increasing numbers just because it pays. In fact, the welfare state notwithstanding, single motherhood is an almost certain road to lifelong poverty for mother and children. If these young women were making a long-term calculation, or any calculation, they would remain virgins. But they aren't. They have absorbed a culture of instant gratification, and they have sex because they feel like it at the moment, and they have or abort the baby because that also feels good at the moment. The welfare state encourages them, certainly, but it is not the driving factor. Cultural collapse is the driving factor.

So, ironically, though Mr. Frum tries to set up an opposition between economic conservatives and cultural conservatives, the anti-Big-Government policies the economic conservatives rightly want can only occur in the context of the culture they dismiss. Absent the recovery of the "bourgeois virtues," and with them the moral courage to make such distinctions as between the deserving and the undeserving poor, the battle against Big Government is pointless. It cannot be won.

That is why a growing number of conservatives have made the culture the first priority. If Mr. Frum wants to explain how we can build a "tough-minded" majority for cutting back on welfare and other Big-Government programs in the current cultural atmosphere, I would be eager to hear him. If he cannot, I suggest he may want to take another look at which came first, a government that subsidizes immorality or a culture that tolerates it.

PAUL M. WEYRICH
Free Congress Foundation
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Frum, like many sympathetic to libertarianism, takes an important and necessary argument and attempts to make of it a self-contained and complete intellectual system. Not only does he (quite correctly) loathe specific policies and actions of the state: for him, the responsibility for human sin itself resides with Big Government:

> The nearly $1 trillion the federal government spends each year on social services and income maintenance—and the additional hundreds of millions spent by the states—is a colossal lure tempting citizens to reckless behavior. *Remove those heaps of money, and the penalties would again deter almost everyone from personal misconduct, as they did before the welfare state was set up in 1933. . . .* [Emphasis added.]

But to assume—even for rhetorical purposes—that American society before the New Deal was some kind of prelapsarian paradise is at best foolish, and at worst by its foolishness quite capsizes any rational discussion of the tendencies to tyranny, asocial behavior, and waste inherent in the unchecked welfare state. Human sin is not just the product of social behavior; it is the product of human behavior; it can only be ameliorated, but never completely cured, through a change in that behavior.

Mr. Frum seems unwilling to recognize that the growth of Big Government arises from something more than the wholly culpable itch for a free lunch. The causes of Big Government are various, and unless we make every effort to separate that in Big Government which we must extirpate, from that which is the necessary—albeit hypertrophied—accompaniment of modern society, we will be engaged in no more than a quixotic cause. What, then, is behind the triumph of Big Government

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N.TARKHOFF - A RUSSIAN IMPRESSIONIST IN PARIS

The painter **Nicolas Tarkhoff** was born on 20th January 1871 in Moscow, and died in Paris on 5th June 1930 aged 59.
His studies were conducted in Moscow and made easier by the fact that his family were wealthy merchants. From the age of 24, he decided to study drawing and painting. After enrolling at the Moscow Academy of Art, he went to Paris in 1899 where he was appointed to the studios of I. P. Laurens and L. O. Merson. It must however be pointed out that before he left Russia, **Tarkhoff** exhibited paintings at the "World of Art" and "Union of Russian Painters", exhibitions where his talent was particulary noted.
Tarkhoff got married in 1905 and had three children. Highly talented, he was undoubtedly one of the greatest masters of his time with his very individual style. From 1900 he worked incessantly and painted many different subjects, such as avenues in movement, markets, "merry go round", streets scenes, people working, all giving great impression of crowds full of movement. His motherhoods are full of love. He was an inside and outside painter.
What is surprising is the "fauve" characteristics in **Tarkhoff**'s work which from 1904 onwards was brightly colored like the typical works of the fauve movement. His paintings possess exceptional vigour, his palette is widely colored and of a particular quality that one finds throughout his "oeuvre". If **Tarkhoff** was not included in the group of fauve painters at the Salon of 1905, it was probably because he had only recently arrived in Paris and not yet knowing the artistic milieux, he could not participate in the salons.
He learnt about the arrangement of mass and perspective from Cézanne. As for his streets scenes, depicted at different times of the day or night - often full of people and horse-drawn vehicles from the turn of the century, he has treated them in a very characteristic manner. His sometimes empty landscapes and streets are brought to life and highlighted in an unexpected way, through his ability to make colors vibrate, like a composer uses seven notes to create the most dazzling effects and hymns praising the beauty of the world.
His fiery temperament shows itself in use of color, in his compositions, his still-lifes, his flowers, his "suns" full of dizzy light, his still lifes in flamboyant colors.
In 1909, an important art book "Peintres de Race" was written and published by Marius Leblond, whose aim was to evaluate the best artists of the time.
Complete chapters are devoted to fourteen artists from different countries, including **Van Gogh, Gauguin,** and **Tarkhoff**. The famous merchant **Ambroise Volard** promoted him and sold his works to the greatest collectors in France and abroad, such as **Stchoukine, Morosov, the Rotschild family** etc. The Gallery Druet held exhibitions of his work as did the marvellous Berthe Weill, a discoverer of great talents.
In 1911, **Tarkhoff** left Paris to retreat to the countryside near Orsay, a small village where he lived apart cutting all his contacts with his Paris galleries.
After his death in 1930, his family decided not to sell his works, but to keep them secretly for decades. This is the reason why **Tarkhoff** was forgotten until the Petit Palais learnt the existence of the collection and started to organize exhibitions all over the world, including at the **Puchkine museum in Moscow and in Saint-Petersburg.**

Works available at the Petit Palais.

"Gargouille" de Notre Dame et Vue sur la Seine, 1901

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which Mr. Frum so eloquently decries?

The causes of the growth of Big Government may be described sketchily as: (1) the enormous expansion in governmental tasks brought about by the waging of scientifically based mass warfare; (2) the dramatic increase in population the world over, combined with the unprecedented geographic and economic mobility of whole nations and peoples; (3) the ability of Big Government to provide external goods—benefits which, however necessary to civilized life, cannot profitably be supplied by the market; (4) the realization that the state's coercive powers, comprising taxation, regulation, and naked force, provide the most mighty engine yet conceived for the imposition of unpopular and even revolutionary social agendas; and (5) the natural tendency implicit in all bureaucracies to invent and then expand their tasks.

Surely Mr. Frum, who doubtless would not have been in favor of surrender to Hitler, Stalin & Co., and Saddam Hussein, would not deny that World War II, the cold war, and, most recently, the Gulf war all required continuing Big Government for their successful prosecution; I would also doubt that Mr. Frum would favor the privatization of our nuclear forces. I do not think that Mr. Frum would like to live in an America without the services of a (properly-monitored) FBI, a CIA, and an NSA—or even an SEC. And so far as rather more benign external benefits are concerned, does Mr. Frum really wish to live in an America without widespread vaccination programs for poor children, adequate medical care for the indigent sick, and income supplements for the indigent elderly; is Mr. Frum willing to pass by the sick and the dying with no more than a bland comment about improvidence?

Mr. Frum's prescription about ending all public support for higher education, however welcome such a policy might be in today's rotting humanities, hardly deals with the need for very expensive scientific education; put more generally, would Mr. Frum, by limiting scholarship assistance to a very few, forsake the American dream of universal higher education, which goes back, in land-grant colleges and state normal schools, to the 19th century?

But with all that there is to say against Mr. Frum's whole-hog strictures, there can be no doubt that he makes many telling points against Big Government as an enemy of American ideals of equity and fairness. Mr. Frum is indeed right: Big Government, further bloated by its sinister and intrusive bureaucracy, has used its coercive powers to enforce on all of us a tyrannical and subtly brutal regime. In the name of family values, government has destroyed the instinctive family structures that historically have encouraged people to take care of their own; in the name of equality, government has created a set of privileged but embittered groups who do not even themselves benefit from the preferential treatment they receive; in the name of universal education, government has fractured the very universality of education; in the name of religious liberty, government has become a relentless foe both of public organized religion and private worship among one's own; in the name of the arts and the humanities, government has destroyed respect for high culture and its enduring achievements throughout human history.

What is so remarkable about these depredations of Big Government against the American people is that the victims are willing supporters of their own destruction. Mr. Frum quite correctly recognizes that the anti-Big-Government argument he urges upon conservatives is not going to be a popular one when it touches the financial interests of the voters. I would further suggest that the social and economic dictates of Big Government, which Mr. Frum and I both loathe, are also welcomed by the American people. In this regard, the recent electoral debacle of school vouchers, even after every allowance has been made for the unconscionable lobbying of teachers' unions and teacher-sponsored parents' organizations, should provide the friends of freedom with much food for thought. So, too, should the unwillingness of the electorate to oppose legislators who supported the infamous Mapplethorpe and Serrano arts grants. Similarly, federal "family" programs are indeed supported by the electorate, as are enforced preferential hirings, and, lest we forget, abortion itself.

Just why are these truly antisocial measures so widely supported? Why do the legislative architects and the camp followers of the unbounded welfare state and the enforced social and sexual revolution win election year after year? The answer to these questions is not, *pace* Mr. Frum, solely a matter of social and economic interests: votes for the legalization of sexual nihilism and affirmative action, perhaps better called affirmative discrimination, cost the majority of voters money, as they well know.

And so we have finally come back to the insufficiency of financial explanations for the determination of political behavior. Of course, economics has a role to play in how people vote: but at least as important as money is the consensually arrived-at decision as to what is desirable, proper, just, and true. This consensual decision is a distillation of our idea of the way we and others ought to live. It is a reflection of the regnant culture, a culture that goes all the way from art, the humanities, and science to popular culture and daily morality. It is because culture is a powerful determinant of what we allow government to do that it must form a part of every discussion of civilized—and not so civilized—life. Mr. Frum, though he might feel uncomfortable with the idea, is a part of our culture too. Though his libertarian arguments do not seem to me fully convincing, he deserves to become a more important part of this great discussion.

SAMUEL LIPMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Have conservatives lost their zeal for small government? Did they ever have it? The lack of a genuine commitment, according to David Frum, explains "why, despite all the caterwauling about Reagan's supposedly savage budget cuts, not one major spending program . . . was eliminated during his presidency. That is why federal spending (adjusted for inflation) rose by 50 percent over the eight Reagan years."

The Reagan record tells a different story. . . . From 1981 to 1989 total federal spending rose from $867.7 billion to $1,057.2 billion (1987 dollars), an increase of 21.8 percent, or 2.5 percent per year. Despite the defense build-up, overall spending grew more slowly than in previous administrations. More

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importantly, the federal government's share of GDP, after growing persistently, was reduced—from 22.9 percent in 1981 to 22.1 percent in 1989.

Perhaps the best index of presidential intent is domestic spending, a broad category that includes entitlements and discretionary programs. In 1960, domestic spending accounted for less than 40.3 percent of the budget, and 7.3 percent of GDP. Then came food stamps (1961), Medicaid and Medicare (1965). In the late 1960's, eligibility requirements for these programs (along with Aid to Families with Dependent Children, a Depression-era program) were relaxed. The Great Society added expensive new federal commitments in elementary and secondary education, job training, housing, and social services.

Domestic spending exploded throughout the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon years. Surprisingly enough, the War on Poverty was not the main culprit. The largest damage, in terms of real dollar increases, occurred in Social Security, where legislation raised benefits seven times between 1965 and 1975, outpacing inflation. By 1981, domestic spending accounted for 66.7 percent of the budget and 15.3 percent of GDP.

Ronald Reagan reversed these trends from the very start. The 1981 budget act made real cuts in a large number of welfare programs, eliminating some very visible domestic programs such as the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA). Discretionary domestic spending by federal agencies fell by 12 percent, in constant dollars, during the eight Reagan years. Grants to state and local governments were halved. With the exception of catastrophic health insurance, later dropped, no major domestic spending programs were launched during the Reagan years.

The untouchables were touched: in 1983 Reagan delayed the cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security. Federal-employee retirement COLA's were eliminated or delayed several times in the early 1980's. Automatic COLA's, an aging population, and the seemingly intractable inflation in medical care pushed entitlement spending ever upward, however.

Total domestic spending did not fall. But it grew far slower on Ronald Reagan's watch, and declined significantly relative to the overall economy. Even the rosy projections in Bill Clinton's latest budget, achieved by keeping health care off-budget, are no match for the Reagan record.

ED RUBENSTEIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is gratifying and not a little encouraging to read David Frum's article in COMMENTARY, a magazine whose considerable virtues have too rarely included an appreciation for limited government. Perhaps this article's publication marks the start of a trend in the right direction.

Although Mr. Frum concentrates, for good reason, on rolling back the existing transfer state, conservatives face another challenge: self-control. The first step to limiting the size of government is not to increase it, however tempting the cause. From 1981 to 1992, for instance, total federal drug-control budget authority increased nearly 700 percent, from $1.5 billion to $11.7 billion. Law-enforcement agencies reaped another $2.6 billion from 1985 to 1993 from asset seizures under federal law. Such seizures permit law-enforcement officials to take property from people accused but not yet convicted in drug cases, and they corrupt law enforcers by encouraging them to pick targets with an eye toward potential revenue. One need not favor drug legalization, as I do, to wonder about the wisdom of conservatives' campaigning for an ever-more aggressive, ever-more expensive federal effort to protect drug users from themselves.

The question now is whether conservatives will make the same mistake on immigration that they made on drugs, and with potentially more far-reaching consequences. Large-scale immigration presents a fundamental challenge to the welfare state. On the one hand, it provides evidence that even illiterate peasants who cannot speak English can find work and raise families in American cities without benefit of the myriad government programs designed to aid the poor. Immigrants' dependence on the "informal" economy, in which regulations are largely ignored, further undermines the claims of paternalists. On the other hand, immigration strains the long-run capacity of the transfer state. If every new

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American represents a nearly unlimited claim on the earnings of every working person, we cannot long tolerate large-scale immigration and automatic citizenship for every baby born on American soil.

Conservatives can now draw the welfare state into closer embrace and reject immigrants, as California governor, Pete Wilson, has done, or use the challenge posed by immigration to attack the welfare state. The question is really one of what to "conserve": the institutions and attitudes of the modern welfare state or the traditional American virtues of self-reliance and ambition, along with the traditional conviction that freedom of movement is an inalienable human right.

Finally, it is important to remember a virtue essential to a bourgeois society but not usually numbered among the bourgeois virtues: the willingness to take risks. Risk-taking makes possible discovery and enterprise, and therefore capitalism. It involves doing things other people think foolish or crazy. It is a virtue of nonconformists. And defenders of the welfare state have declared war on it.

Mr. Frum correctly warns that the welfare state insulates us from the consequences of our risk-taking, from poverty in old age if we do not save, for instance. But increasingly it also forbids us to take risks—to drive without seat belts, to ride motorcycles or bicycles without helmets, to smoke. The Clinton health-care plan, or any compromise that either guarantees "universal coverage" or forbids insurers to charge higher premiums for higher risks, will only make this situation worse. As a caller recently told me on a radio show, "My grandmother used to say, 'If you want to run my life, pay my rent.' " By allowing government to pay our rents, we have invited it to run our lives.

VIRGINIA I. POSTREL
Editor, *Reason*
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the twelve Republican years, I believe that no real attempt was made to cut government spending. David Stockman, Ronald Reagan's first budget director, was early on repeatedly vilified for so much as thinking about cuts, and the Reagan administration quickly thought better of it. No doubt that is the explanation for Stockman's subsequent apparent disaffection from Republican politics.

Every January thereafter, the press would carry ventriloquized warnings from Capitol Hill to the White House, to the effect that any budget with real cuts would be "dead on arrival." Administration officials then negotiated with themselves and eliminated anything that might annoy congressional chairmen. Later on, Democrats showed that despite being out of power they were not afraid to play hardball: they pointed out that not once since 1980 had the Republicans proposed a balanced budget! And so it went. As someone said, the contest in U.S. politics is between the evil party and the stupid party.

The recent *real* cuts in the defense budget have shown that the opponents of spending in specified areas can prevail if they are suitably armored by ideology, and thus willing to ignore the complaints of constituents. Democrats, broadly speaking, are so armored. Republicans still seem to lack conviction as to their own moral legitimacy. Social workers intimidate them, in ways that generals and admirals fail to intimidate Democrats. That, alas, is the world we live in. Social workers, not poets, are the unacknowledged legislators of our day.

David Frum's interesting article sheds additional light on the controversy that arose between Charles Murray, who says that the ruination of our inner cities is caused by welfare, and Myron Magnet, who argues that "the culture" is really to blame. In the latter view, we may discern a certain elegant distaste for economic explanations: an arcane field, of interest perhaps to technocrats with slide rules, but not so important to those with liberal-arts degrees. It is "the culture" that truly matters, they feel.

Disdain for economics seems to be spreading among conservatives, Patrick J. Buchanan having very much adopted that dangerous position. To some extent, the economics profession itself is to blame. For years economists sought to impress the world with the mathematical nature of their enterprise. The rest of the world took them at their word—and ignored what they were saying. But economics is about people working, which is to say a major part of all our lives. It is also about people being paid for not working—a growing menace to all our lives. The danger, as Mr. Frum points out, is that unearned dollars distributed by the state tempt citizens into recklessness. Irresponsibility, punished by the market, is rewarded by the state.

What Mr. Frum does not bring out is that comparatively small sums can achieve this bad result. Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the main welfare program, is now a major threat to U.S. society—but not because it is a particularly large dollar amount in relation to the federal budget (about 1 percent). It is a threat because it allows several million people to behave irresponsibly. Conservatives might again be tempted to conclude that budgetary details are not really all that important, because dollar totals and their social effects are incommensurate. The real lesson, however, is that even a small amount of fiscal irresponsibility—and Republicans have managed to ignore large quantities of it—can have terrible effects.

TOM BETHELL
American Spectator
Washington, D.C.

DAVID FRUM writes:

William Kristol's claim that conservatives and Republicans are increasingly uniting against Big Government reminds me of the story about the dark day in June 1940 when Winston Churchill's top cabinet ministers came to tell him that surrender was the only possible course. Before the first one could speak, Churchill interrupted: "I know why you've come," he said. "You've come to tell me that if I consider surrender for one moment, you'll hurl me from this place." Ashamed and inspired, they all instantly decided that, yes, of course, that was exactly what they had come to tell him.

Republicans who have recently undergone one of Dr. Kristol's backbone-strengthening operations may well talk a strong anti-government line for a moment. But after all the surgeries he has had to perform, can he *really* believe the party—or the conservative movement—is so robust? He knows better than anyone how close Jack Kemp—and, by the way, Newt Gingrich, too—came to endorsing the central principles of

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the Clinton health plan last December. He possesses a more accurate tally than I do of the Congressmen who would have cast a vote against Penny-Kasich if there had been any danger of its passing into law.

I agree with Mr. Kristol that there are great opportunities for creative statesmanship, and that because of the fiscal instability of the welfare state, the public mood is potentially more hostile to government now than it was fifteen years ago. I even agree with Newt Gingrich that the Republicans in the House of Representatives have offered some exciting ideas for seizing these opportunities. But surely Mr. Kristol, and perhaps Congressman Gingrich, too, would agree with me that the Republicans most eager to take advantage of those opportunities—Phil Gramm, Pete du Pont, Tommy Thompson, even William Weld—at the moment trail the presidential pack, and that the Republicans leading the pack—Jack Kemp and Robert Dole—are those who are most unwilling to explore those opportunities. Virginia I. Postrel is absolutely right that immigration represents just such a chance to prod the country into rethinking welfarism. I would bet the mortgage, though, that it is Pete Wilson and not Miss Postrel who has anticipated the future immigration policy of the Republican party.

Nobody lightly disputes statistics with Ed Rubenstein: certainly nobody who has asked him for help with them as often as I have. Yet this time, I think, he puts too optimistic a gloss on his numbers. Mr. Rubenstein says that Reagan eliminated "some very visible domestic programs." That seems to imply that more than one such program was done away with. He names, as I did, CETA. Can he name a second?

I find it less impressive than Mr. Rubenstein does that Ronald Reagan brought down the ratio of federal spending to GDP. GDP grew so fast between 1983 and 1989 that even the period's substantial rise in spending failed to bump the ratio. Alas, after 1989, GDP growth faltered, but government growth did not—and up the ratio went again.

Nor can I quite accept Mr. Rubenstein's claim that the best way to judge a President's domestic intent is by using a "domestic-spending" gauge that excludes the cost of interest payments. Net interest payments rose from $69 billion in 1981 to $169 billion in 1989, for the reasons that Tom Bethell describes.

Mr. Rubenstein has fairly caught me on one important item: I should not have written that under Reagan, federal spending rose by 50 percent after inflation. The 50-percent figure is *before* inflation. Dumbness on my part, pure dumbness. That confessed, the argument still stands: the overspending in the 1980's generated such colossal deficits that the Reagan tax cuts became politically unsustainable. Hesitant to propose further tax cuts, unable under the psychic weight of the deficits even to preserve the tax cuts of the past, conservatives have since the mid-1980's tended to let the whole subject of the size and cost of government drop.

This tendency does not overly bother Samuel Lipman and Paul M. Weyrich. They argue that it is naive to suppose that Big Government alone has set in motion the social trends conservatives deplore. Their admonitions remind me of the old warning, "If all you have is a hammer, all your problems come to look like nails."

It is an important warning. But it so happens, as a matter of fact, that all we do have is a hammer. If everything Messrs. Lipman and Weyrich say is true—if it is atheism that is the deep problem, or the sexual revolution, or the loss of Western self-confidence—*what then*? Nobody has any convincing idea of how a modern democratic government could possibly inculcate morality in its people. Virtually the only thing it can do is spend more or spend less.

I understand why an argument that may smack of libertarianism irritates Messrs. Lipman and Weyrich. Libertarian theory has too often justified weakness abroad and libertinism at home. But whatever we think of libertarianism as a philosophy, I do not believe we are going to find much alternative to it as a policy. Mr. Lipman himself, if I read his letter correctly, is prepared to go pretty far in this direction—presumably because he recognizes that, if cultural conservatism is to have content, it must adopt political means adequate to the problems it perceives. Speeches from some hypothetical future conservative President telling Americans to behave themselves will not be enough. I don't know that rolling back the welfare function of government

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will be enough, either. But what else is there?

The "New York Times"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I appreciate the attention that Joseph Epstein gave my book, *Behind the Times: Inside the New New York Times*, in his provocative article, "The Degradation of the *New York Times*" [May]. I also thank him for describing me as an "energetic reporter" and availing himself in his piece of so much of the material from my book. However, I must quarrel with his major misreadings of the book. To take one of his most serious misrepresentations, he writes that the *Times*'s former executive editor A.M. Rosenthal is "one of Diamond's great villains." Mr. Epstein then suggests that I consider Rosenthal "guilty of effectively moving the *Times* to the Right." Further, Mr. Epstein accuses me of calling Rosenthal a "misogynist and homophobe." Wrong, wrong, wrong.

First, Rosenthal is, in fact, a larger-than-life figure who dominates my book by the force of his personality and intelligence. While he appears throughout the book—my narrative encompasses the 1960's, 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's, the period of his greatest activity at the *Times*—I devote an entire chapter to his accomplishments. It is called "Last of the Red Hot Mamas"—Rosenthal's own description of himself to me in our interviews (how can a Sophie Tucker figure be a villain?). Second, I show how the publisher, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, and the business side of the paper moved the *Times* to the Right. Rosenthal, the fearsome editor, I concluded, served as another of the hired hands of the Sulzberger family. (Nowhere, not so incidentally, do I criticize this rightward shift; I *report* it.) Finally, Mr. Epstein's homophobia reference is particularly egregious. I devote close attention to the *Times*'s treatment of the AIDS epidemic and examine some gay activists' allegations that the *Times* news department lagged in its early coverage. I specifically report that some subeditors in the newsroom interpreted Rosenthal's attitude as homophobic. But then I specifically document how Rosenthal's *Times*—and Max Frankel's—did devote great attention to the AIDS story. And I analyze how demographic considerations shaped coverage along with news values. It is an analysis that goes against the conventional wisdom of the subject.

To conclude on a personal note: Mr. Epstein presumes to know my politics, considering me, on his pop-eyed reading of my book, a hopeless liberal. But I saw my role as a nonideological one, that of describing what has been happening at the *Times* over the past 25 years. When, in the final pages of my book, I permit myself what Mr. Epstein would consider political judgments, they are not putatively "liberal" ones. Thus, I describe the *Times*'s current publisher as promoting a kind of "skin-deep diversity in the newsroom"—and I call that a limp banner for rallying the cause of serious journalism. Maybe that is why long-time *Village Voice* columnist Geoffrey Stokes, in his review of *Behind the Times*, wrote that my "conservative biases" were showing.

With critics like Stokes and Epstein, I'll take energetic reporting any day.

EDWIN DIAMOND
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edwin Diamond has sent me a copy of his letter to COMMENTARY about Joseph Epstein's comments on his book about the *New York Times*. Since Mr. Diamond's letter is largely about me, I thought it would be useful if I replied in COMMENTARY on my own behalf.

I have not read Mr. Diamond's book. I did take it from the shelf in a bookstore, intending to buy it. I looked myself up in the index and read a few of the references to me. Each one was either inaccurate, mean-spirited, or stale, untrue gossip. The same tired stuff, to me devoid of sophistication or knowledgeability about journalism, which I understand he now teaches.

I thought, who needs this nonsense?—and I put the book back. I have not heard it discussed since.

So I cannot comment directly on the book itself. But Mr. Diamond's letter to COMMENTARY shows me how wise and sensibly thrifty of my money and time I was.

In his letter, Mr. Diamond says that the publisher of the paper, then Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, now the chairman of the New York Times Company, and Walter Mattson, the business manager of the paper, moved the paper to the Right and that I served as a hired hand in the process.

The comment shows a painful lack of knowledge about the paper. In the 25 years I was an editor, the business side of the paper never, but never, tried to steer me or the news columns of the paper in any political direction, Left, Right, up, or down. Walter Mattson, head of the business department when I was managing or executive editor, took as much pride in the paper as I or Mr. Sulzberger and was as determined as either of us to make sure that no political pressure, from within or without, was placed on the reporters and editors. I understand that is difficult for Mr. Diamond to grasp, but he might try.

Secondly, neither Mr. Sulzberger nor I moved the paper to the Right. What we tried to do, and successfully, was to prevent the news columns from being used politically, consciously or unconsciously, by editorialization in the news columns, unfair attack, anonymous pejorative criticism, and other violations of what we considered decent journalism and the standards of the *Times*. In other words, we kept the paper straight.

Again, I understand Mr. Diamond may find this hard to grasp. I believe that is because Mr. Diamond, like so many other interviewers, suffers from an interesting problem. He erects a mirror between himself and the subject so when he looks at the subject he really is looking at himself. He knows that if he were the publisher or editor of the *Times*, he damned well would try to impose his own opinions and political biases on the news columns. He assumes therefore that I or Mr. Sulzberger would do so too. It does not occur to him that the subject of the interview might be considerably stronger, more ethical, or a better and more honest journalist than he.

These interviewers who see themselves in the mirror tell a great deal about themselves, but not much about the people foolish enough to have given them time. Mr. Diamond does not understand much about Mr. Sulzberger, Mr. Mattson, or about me, but of course I accept the fact that he knows himself well.

A.M. ROSENTHAL
New York City

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What Joseph Epstein seems to mean when he refers to the "degradation" of the *New York Times* is that it is not as far Right politically as he is. Many of us feel that the *Times* is better than ever. . . . In my opinion, the *Times*'s treatment of foreign affairs is excellent. As I often say, the *Times* is not just the best paper in the country, it's the only one.

[RABBI] SAMUEL M. SILVER
Temple Sinai
Delray Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Epstein must be growing weary of the burden of carting around his procrustean bed of bias in laying out first the *New York Review of Books* ["Thirty Years of the *New York Review*," December 1993] and now the *New York Times* itself. Mr. Epstein has emerged as our articulate vigilante in sniffing out traces of liberal and/or leftist thinking as he defines it. He spares no one in his broad sweep of *Times* writers, then and now. He lampoons the article on begging on New York streets because it did not take a position. I read the same piece and was impressed by the writer's intimation of the complexity of the issue itself. Mr. Epstein wants the *Times* to come down hard in concluding what Mr. Epstein concludes.

The fact is that, despite his protests, Mr. Epstein simply wants the *Times* to write as he thinks. He did not like it when Arthur Krock, James Reston, and C.L. Sulzberger wrote in the past any more than he likes Anna Quindlen or Anthony Lewis today. Nonetheless, . . . *Times* writers continue to win front-ranking recognition among newspaper people the country over.

CHARLES ANSELL
Sherman Oaks, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his critique of the current management of the *New York Times*, Joseph Epstein refers to the ease with which it is possible to predict any *Times* editorial position. I assume that this is meant as a point of criticism, since Mr. Epstein goes on to note the enjoyment he derives from watching the *Times* editorial writers "squirm" in rationalizing the irrational. On the other hand, as Mr. Epstein himself chooses to publish in COMMENTARY, whose editorial predictabil-

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The Golan Heights

To Whom Do They Belong? Can Israel Survive Without Them?

Now that Gaza and part of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") have been turned over to the Palestinians, the clamor for peace with Syria becomes ever more strident.It is understood that in order to attain such peace, it will be necessary for Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

"With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—except for the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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ity is granite compared with the *New York Times*'s clay, the state of his actual feelings vis-à-vis editorial predictability is somewhat mysterious to me.

MICHAEL HALPERN
Glenside, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Epstein's article is sad and true. But in his polite manner he has failed to point out how the paper has injected a very real element of danger into the country's intellectual climate.

In the midst of intense fear and public confusion about crime and its causes, the *Times* fails to see how it is demonizing a very large group of (primarily white, middle-class) people as causing and contributing to crime rather than having opposing political or intellectual views from those held by the *Times* staff. . . . As recently as May 3, the *Times* continued to create the justification for a reprehensible intellectual climate of scapegoating, when, in an editorial, it accused almost four million people, members of the National Rifle Association, of participating in "well-organized fanaticism." And that was very polite language and wording relative to its normal vitriol on this topic. . . .

MARK S. LEVEY
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Epstein notes the stuffy style of the old *New York Times*. It still is boring, especially when, striving not to be, it starts news columns as if they were novels—"Joe Blow sawed planks for his Xanthian village. . . ." It ignores the basic news-story format, which runs from the general to the particular, so busy readers can grasp the story's framework and its major points quickly. Although wordy, the articles often omit explanation, leaving readers perplexed and fatigued. . . .

A font of misinformation, the *Times* advocates its traditionally anti-Zionist view with a preponderance of articles favoring the Arabs. . . . Despite frequent denunciations of extremism, it disproportionately quotes appeasement-minded Jewish extremists as if they were the authority on Israel, and it allows vicious Arab slander against Israel to go unchallenged. Photos, headlines, terminology, and maps are distorted. Just before the Six-Day War, Jordan occupied Judea and Samaria, but *Times* maps showed the area as part of Jordan. Just after the war, when those territories reverted to Israeli control, . . . *Times* maps showed the area as "occupied" by Israel, a misconception now quite popular. . . .

RICHARD H. SHULMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for Joseph Epstein's excellent discussion of the *New York Times*. He has confirmed my lingering suspicion that the newspaper I used to revere has lately become (I choose my words carefully) full of crap. The *Times* is clearly written these days for a few hundred people between the ages of twenty-one and forty, who reside on Manhattan's Upper East Side, summer on Fire Island, and spend most of their waking hours shopping for beads, torn jeans, organic vegetables, and "relationships."

Those of us who still appreciate the profession of journalism . . . and serious journalists have long ago fled to the glorious and uplifting oases of the *Wall Street Journal* and COMMENTARY!

JEFFREY ROBERTS
Jericho, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Epstein's "The Degradation of the *New York Times*" is right on target. Having read the *Times* since its two-cent days, I have seen the disintegration of what used to be called an institution. But, like Mr. Epstein, I continue the habit, albeit now down to three times a week.

Why the editors of the *Times*, with its reputation for quality, scurry about "in an attempt to keep up with what they construe to be the spirit of the age" is disconcertingly puzzling. . . . Certainly Mr. Epstein is correct in claiming that the *Times* is trying ever so hard to be "with-it." . . . Take the Sunday magazine section. If by chance an interesting topic is broached, the so-called hip style turns curiosity into boredom in its condescension to the nonliterate public. Even film reviews no longer educate taste, but cater to the fashion of television soap opera. Unlike Mr. Epstein, I used to enjoy some of the weekly special sections. Today, however, with the distracting graphs and data charts, . . . contemplation of serious issues is no longer needed. But one thing that has remained consistent is the *Times*'s anti-Zionist, anti-Israel policy. . . .

The radicalization of the *New York Times* on all levels—quality, opinion, taste, even format (I think of the classic layout of page one and of a time when only a declaration of war or peace brought forth across-the-page headlines. . .)—calls for a new newspaper for New Yorkers. Perhaps Mr. Epstein and Hilton Kramer, who has written some scathing articles criticizing the *Times* in the *New York Post*, will take up this torch so that I may once again read a newspaper daily.

DANIEL SPICEHANDLER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Degradation of the *New York Times*," Joseph Epstein does not claim to have made a full diagnosis of that influential institution. But his article suggests that the effects of the paper's decline are relatively localized and innocuous. The *Times*'s pathologies—its lockstep compliance (bordering on parody) with the program and practices of political correctness; its timid embrace of multiculturalism as long as the culture is not conventional Western; its paternalistic and politicized news coverage; and its unending, uncritical, and unoriented life-style fluff—are more pervasive and consequential than Mr. Epstein suggests.

As the nation's *de-facto* paper of record, the *Times* is the most important single source of nontechnical information on the events of the day. While it is nice to have numerous sources of fragmentary or specialized news and commentary, people benefit from having all issues addressed in one voice and in one place. A paper of record does that. Moreover, a paper of record serves as an accessible and continuous reference point (or standard) for fixing the scope and tenor of public debate over the issues of our time. . . .

While there exists no formal device for investing the *Times*, or any other paper, with the powers and responsibilities of an official paper of record, for whatever reasons it just so happened that the *Times* came to fill this role in the United States and it did so while delighting in the accompanying influence and moral weight. Perhaps one of the reasons many

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people find the paper's current shrill tone so grating is that, apart from an ingrained abhorrence of moral self-righteousness, one feels that a position of trust and power (albeit informal) has been abused. It is analogous to the otherwise disproportionate interest in some of the Clintons' prior activities: if someone sets himself up as a moral arbiter (or a patron saint of a politics of meaning) or presumes to revamp broad walks of life with which he has no direct knowledge other than something he read in a book or heard at careerist networking symposia, he had better be able to meet high standards indeed.

Mr. Epstein could have spoken more broadly:

• It is not merely, as he writes, that "the true politics of the new *New York Times* are to be found at work on the issues of feminism, racism, homosexuality." This suggests that in the *Times* these issues have no radical priority over all others of concern to humankind. Obviously, the paper continues to run measured and neutral articles on some issues (Bosnia and business coverage, perhaps). But in fastidious accord with PC practice in the university, the paper is obsessed with these issues, which govern its coverage of all others (when they do not displace them altogether). The litmus test for government competence and administration is diversity in staffing; the litmus test for political compassion and responsiveness is AIDS mobilization; that for sound military policy (as for organized religion) is "gender" sensitivity; and so on. Symptomatic of issue displacement is that items on the Navy's Tailhook convention, gays in the military, and coeducation at The Citadel substantially outnumber those on all issues regarding worldwide arms proliferation, Latin America, and South Asia combined. . . .

• When, as Mr. Epstein notes, the editorial positions of the *Times* are predictable in their entirety, they are obviously not the work of serious or discriminating mentalities. Politics and social life are complex. The predictability of *Times* editorials demonstrates more adolescent certitude than any practical insight. . . . Normally one thinks of editorials as places for adducing facts, identifying distinctions, developing an analysis, i.e., for making an argument. If courts should be finding broad

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abortion rights, what are the pertinent facts regarding fetal development or constitutional law? You will not learn these or other things in *Times* editorials, which merely cheer when the *Times* likes something and whine when it does not. . . .

• The *Times* is immune to the basic notion that, in our system of government, judges apply and interpret the law, but that the people's elected representatives make the laws and set policy. The *Times* rarely inquires whether judges make correct legal decisions. It wonders only whether there has been a happy outcome. Thus, it will express endless adulation on the resignation of this or that judge, . . . with scarcely a sentence regarding whether the judge's decisions were generally accurate legally. This aversion to the rough and tumble of democratic debate and majority rule . . . resonates in the *Times*'s policies on printing letters to the editor. One almost never sees there an animated incisive attack on the policies of the *Times* itself (even though the paper must receive boxes of them every day).

Perhaps at the end of the day the decline of the *Times* is felicitous for our social and political culture. It diminishes the authority and influence which the *Times* wielded as a *de-facto* paper of record. But whether we have a malfunctioning paper of record or have lost one altogether, the circumstance is regrettable.

THOMAS A. CONNOLLY
New York City

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

Edwin Diamond is apparently one of those cheerful writers who go happily about their work, letting the details pile up, without having a very strong sense of the cumulative picture such details leave when taken together. So allow me to assure Mr. Diamond that his picture of A.M. Rosenthal is a mocking and cruel one, making the case that Rosenthal, during his tenure as editor of the *New York Times*, was a bully, a social climber, a stultifier of progress, and a man who above all looked out for Number One, which is to say, for himself.

Mr. Diamond takes pleasure in the fact that the politics of his book were found wanting in both the *Village Voice* and COMMENTARY, and chooses to see this as evidence of the undoctrinaire quality and hence fundamental soundness of those politics. I think he might do better to consider that the general political line in his book comes off as unconvincing from various, even strikingly dissimilar, points of view.

I wonder if I cannot kill three different birds with one distinction by reminding Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, Charles Ansell, and Michael Halpern that I am not for a moment asking that the *New York Times* share my politics; all I am asking is that the paper live up to its pretensions as a national newspaper by being as objective, as fair-minded, and (in its reporting) as unbiased as the best journalism has always claimed to be.

Addiction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Who Is Addicted to What?," Midge Decter's critique of an article by Barbara Ehrenreich [Contentions, April], I found the dismissal of Ehrenreich's main point, that society is hypocritical in its enforcement of drug laws, rather flippant. Does an argument need to be new to be valid?

Miss Decter goes on to make the point that we as a society need to be concerned about the messages we are sending our young. It might be useful, then, to look at the messages we, through our judicial system, are actually sending. At a recent Grateful Dead concert, a twenty-year-old boy was arrested for purchasing LSD from an undercover Drug Enforcement Agency officer. Through a loose interpretation of current sentencing guidelines, the LSD, along with the sugar cube it was dissolved in, was weighed—as if the sample were pure LSD. Accordingly, it was determined that the quantity of LSD, though only one dose, put the boy in the same class as a drug dealer and was sufficient to merit a 22-year jail sentence without parole.

To allow prison space for "hardened" criminals like this young man, the average sentence for attempted murder in this country has fallen to six-and-one-half years. When society metes out punishment in this fashion, what kind of confirmation exists for the law-abiders who sit back and watch it happen? And as for the unfortunate and mostly nonviolent few who are actually imprisoned for this type of illegal possession, what kind of message do they receive? Does it really teach anyone a healthy respect for the law to see murderers and rapists go free while first-time drug users are locked up?

The simple fact that a law exists does not in itself provide justification for its enforcement. That is the philosophy behind the creation of the judicial branch of government—to rule on the constitutionality of *existing* laws. Of course we need to teach our young the virtues and benefits of living within the limits set by one's community. We have an equal obligation to teach our young that the community is not the sole arbiter of morals, that we also need our family, our culture, and our God.

It is from this perspective we should be fighting the "war" on drugs. The abuse of drugs is not wrong because of any written law. The abuse of any drug, including legal ones, is wrong because it saps our spiritual strength, destroys our families, and deprives the community of the contribution all of us have an obligation to make. This moral framework goes beyond legislation.

FREDERICK G.S. DEAL
Tempe, Arizona

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For the first time in my life, I find myself agreeing with Barbara Ehrenreich. In her column, she listed many practical arguments against drug prohibition, but omitted the strongest one of all: the inherent dangers of fighting "victimless" crime.

To illustrate, let us compare the drug trade with the dissemination of *samizdat* literature in the old Soviet empire. Morally, the two activities are, of course, worlds apart. However, from the police point of view, they present similar law-enforcement problems; no aggrieved party (i.e., victim) is likely to notify them that a crime has taken place. Therefore, the police must insinuate themselves into these "criminal" transactions in order to combat them.

This necessarily involves various highly dubious tactics: the use of informants, *agents provocateurs*, wiretaps, mass searches and seizures, etc., all of which tend to erode personal liberty (rather severely in the Soviet instance).

Already, measures such as random drug testing have made a mockery of the presumption of

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innocence. As public frustration with crime continues (quite understandably) to grow, politicians and judges are likely further to increase the size and power of the various anti-drug bureaucracies; where will it—can it—end?

It would appear that a better approach would be the one recommended by such sober folk as William F. Buckley, Jr., George Shultz, Milton Friedman, and the editors of the *Economist* magazine: legalize but discourage. Such an approach has been proven to work; after all, tobacco use in North America has been cut in half without resorting to prohibition.

It is unfortunate that conservatives, normally so rightly suspicious of increased government power, suffer from a curious blind spot when confronting this particular issue.

Please bear in mind that creating a new KGB or Gestapo is too high a price to pay for a drug-free society.

GORDON C. GALLAND
London, Ontario, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

A study by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration discloses that the number of patients coming to hospital emergency rooms with drug-connected problems increased 10 percent in 1992. The study reveals that cocaine-related hospital visits figured in more than 25 percent of the 433,500 emergency-room visits blamed on illegal drug use; heroin-related visits rose 34 percent to 48,000; and marijuana-related visits increased 48 percent to 24,000.

Moreover, a new study from the National Institute on Drug Abuse points out that teenage drug use has sharply increased; the study also reveals that teenage alcohol use and cigarette smoking are on the rise.

Some people insist that the solution to the nationwide epidemic of drug abuse is the legalization of drugs; but this nation has already experimented with the legalization of heroin and cocaine, and the experiment failed. In 1909, Dr. Lyman Kebler, then chief of the Drugs Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, described the pernicious personal and social consequences of drug legalization:

> Cocaine, in some cases, transforms safe and otherwise tractable citizens into dangerous characters, and, in most instances, wrecks the individual and those dependent upon him. . . . In districts where druggists dispense cocaine, disorder has increased so noticeably that it is commented upon by the neighbors and the police officers on the beats.

Man is by nature a social animal; we need other human beings, and they need us. From these elementary truths, we can understand that we possess social and moral obligations that sometimes require us to subordinate our private, selfish interests and pursuits for the sake of the common good. By keeping drugs like marijuana, cocaine, heroin, PCP, and LSD illegal, the state is asking people to sacrifice a little bit of freedom for the moral well-being of society. This is a valuable lesson for people to learn.

HAVEN BRADFORD GOW
Arlington Heights, Illinois

MIDGE DECTER writes:

To Frederick G.S. Deal: There is no question that this society's efforts to deal with the curse of drug use have been anything but successful. In fact, as I suggested, they are in a mess. But you seem to suppose that pointing out the moral insanity of much of our treatment of murderers and rapists (I would add child molesters and abusers to the list) strengthens your argument for decriminalization. Whereas all you have done is to underline the need to liberate our criminal-justice system from its by now hidebound tradition of misguided (sometimes perverted) constitutional understandings. With this I would heartily concur. Another point with which I heartily agree is that, in your words, the "moral framework goes beyond legislation." But the law is not something separate from that framework; it is, or at least is intended to be, a communal expression of it, made necessary precisely by the fact that we humans have so often proven to be fallen from "our family, our culture, and our God."

To Gordon C. Galland: "Legalize but discourage," attractive as any conservative is bound to find it, is a policy based on a purely abstract principle, without consideration of the particular and concrete case. The parallel you draw with cigarette smoking, for in-

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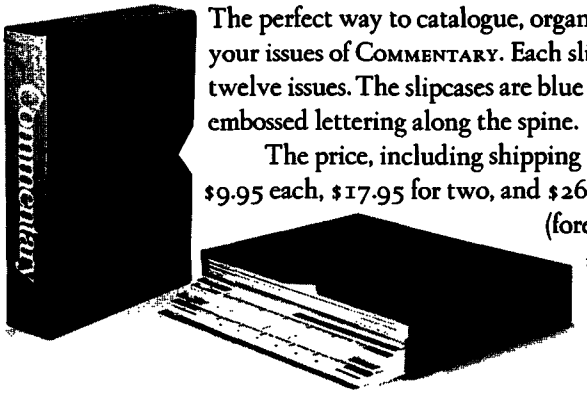

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Commentary

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stance, simply doesn't wash in the realm of actual experience. Cigarettes, while certainly addictive, are not *like* drugs: they do not, for one thing, induce a simulacrum of ecstasy and power that ever after must be longed-for and increasingly unattainable and hence make life with or without them equally unendurable; and no one who smokes cigarettes is ever for one moment deceived into thinking that he is doing something in any respect praiseworthy. The 60's counterculture and its toadies so deceived at least one generation and at the very least created an enormous confusion in the "discourage" department from which we are not likely to emerge for a very, very long time. Remember the jeering that greeted Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign? Drugs, to borrow from Mr. Dooley, ain't bean-bag.

As for your comparison with *samizdat*, I will in kindness pass it by without comment.

To Haven Bradford Gow, I would only add that, historically speaking, Americans have never enjoyed so much license to engage in potentially hurtful behavior as they do now—or had so little sacrifice for the sake of the moral well-being of society exacted from them.

Russia & Europe

To the Editor of Commentary:

George Weigel's brilliant article, "Creeping Talbottism" [March], should have included a clear statement that pessimism about Russia does not mean rejection of a grand optimistic vision of the future. For example, I think that it is important to support a united political bloc "from Vancouver to Vladivostok," but one should also point out that such a noble ideal is unlikely to materialize in the foreseeable future, perhaps not even during the first half of the next century. The reason for this prediction is connected to the deep economic, political, and cultural differences among the states in the area. During Gorbachev's perestroika there were some experts in the U.S., all hopelessly out of touch with reality, who said that the Soviet empire should not be dismantled, in order to save the already existing degree of integration. Such a naive approach by Gorbaphiles to the problems of integration did not work then, and similar mistakes should not be repeated in post-1991 circumstances. So it should be emphasized that realism about the midterm prospects of Russia does not exclude a desire to build a foundation for a closer alliance in the future.

There is also a positive feature of the Partnership for Peace (PFP): it is a good and sufficiently ambiguous framework for building cautious security cooperation between Russia and NATO. But it makes no sense to apply the PFP scheme to the Visegrad countries [Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary], which should be accepted as full NATO members as soon as possible. The same applies to the Baltic states; I think Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania should become NATO members together with (or immediately after) the Visegrad states.

Mr. Weigel mentions the fact that Poles and others are concerned about Russia's new assertiveness. But this message could be sharpened. It is easy to see why tiny Estonia is afraid of huge Russia, but one must have considerable imagination to figure out how Russia could be afraid of Estonia. Furthermore, one may ask, why are the Visegrad countries, the Baltic states, and some other East and Central European states afraid of what is behind the Kremlin's rhetoric about the "near-abroad" and spheres of "vital interest"? Are these countries all mistaken; have they all misunderstood the historic changes in Moscow? Do the populations of these countries all suffer from short-sighted Russophobia? Why are all these countries so unanimous in their fear of Russia; why are they not equally afraid of Germany or other West European powers which have historically also been their adversaries? Why should the Kremlin feel offended if a plain empirical truth is stated: Russia has so far not been able to ease the worries of its small neighbors? Why should a democratic Russia feel "encircled" or "alienated" if membership in NATO eases the fears of its small neighbors, given that there is no strategic threat from the West to Russia? If the Russian government really thinks that the fears of the East and Central European countries are groundless, why cannot Russia assure them of its good intentions by allowing (or even encouraging) them to join NATO?

Andrus Park
Estonian Academy of Sciences
Tallinn, Estonia

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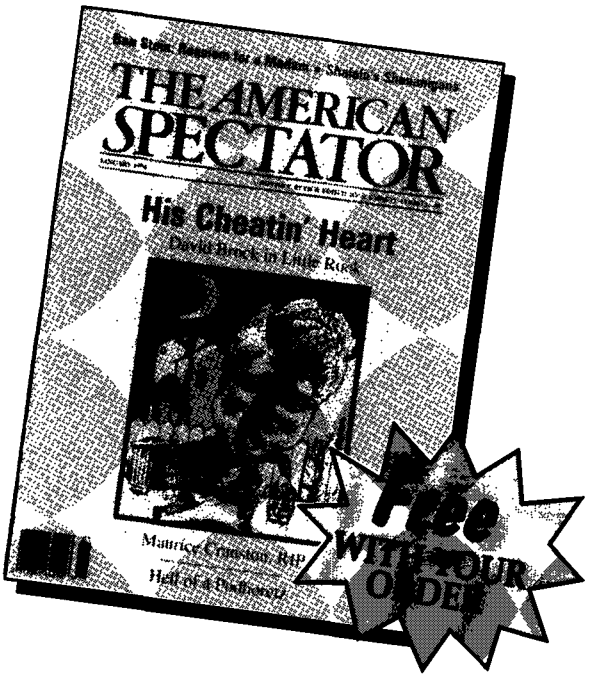

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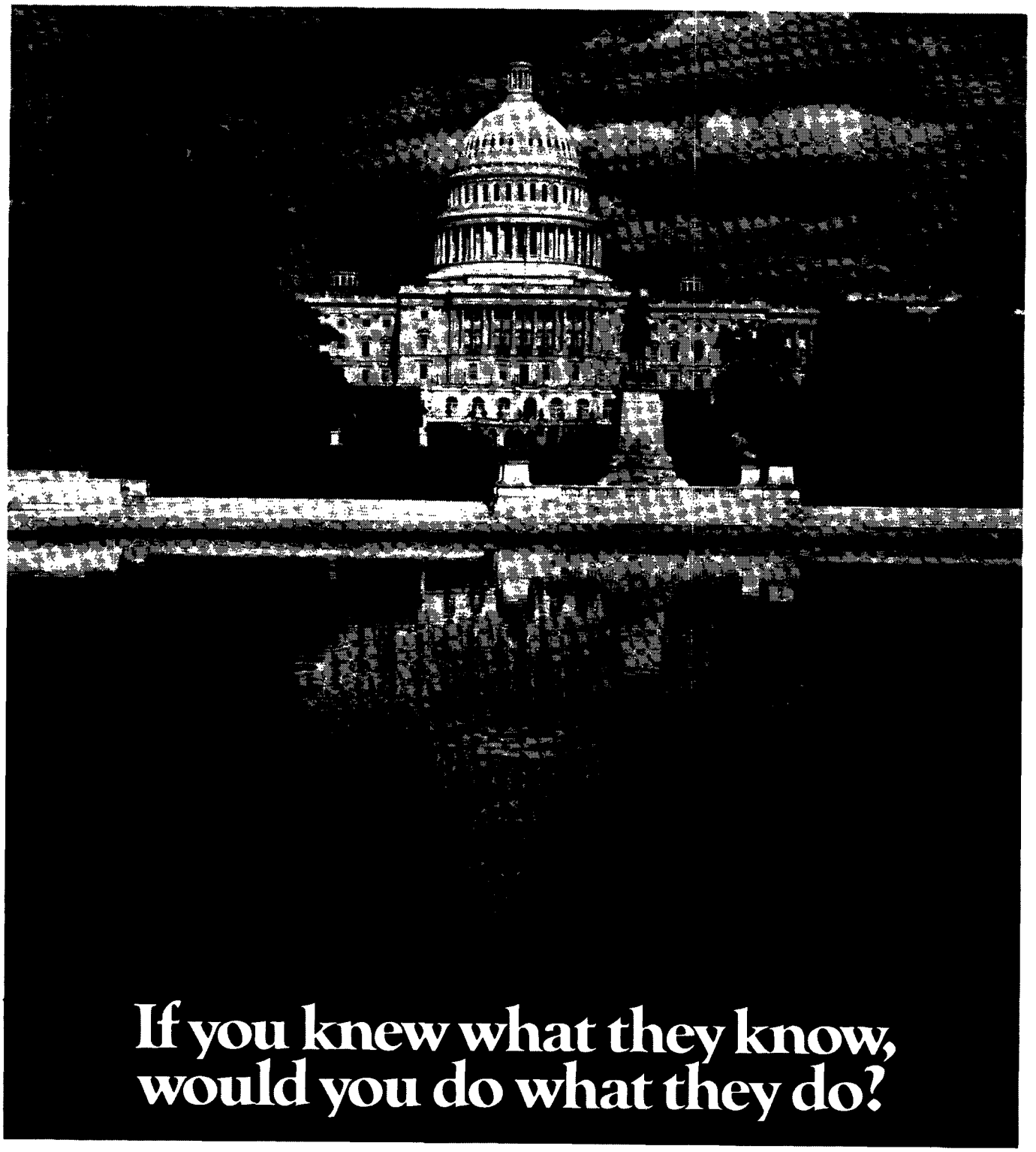

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Why Religion Is Good for the Jews

Irving Kristol

If a religious community experiences a very low birth rate and a very high rate of intermarriage—50 percent—what kind of future will it have? Obviously, not much of one.

Yet the American Jewish community, which is experiencing both of these phenomena, seems to feel no anguish, only a growing anxiety. After all, a very low birth rate fits neatly into the upper-middle-class style of life which appeals to contemporary wives and husbands alike—and it is in this upper-middle class that Jews are ever more concentrated. And a high rate of intermarriage testifies to the ever-fuller acceptance of Jews by the non-Jewish community. Is that not what American Jews have always wanted? Is that not what America has always promised? How fortunate American Jews are to be living in such a wonderful country!

It really is a wonderful country, and they are truly fortunate to be a part of it. Never in the history of the Diaspora has there been anything comparable to the American experience. Never in Jewish history have Jews achieved, not mere toleration, but the full civic equality promised them by none less than George Washington himself. Along with this full civic equality there has also come an unparalleled degree of social equality. (These days, even Ivy League universities seem to feel they cannot do without Jewish presidents.) In short, America has so warmly embraced its Jews, and Jews have so enthusiastically responded to this embrace, that the American Jewish community may yet vanish—by osmosis, as it were.

Is that what the community wants? And if not, what, if anything, can be done about it? Facing such questions, the major Jewish organizations are so skittish that one senses a positive relief and renewal on their part at the appearance of any new signs of old-fashioned anti-Semitism. *That* is a problem they are familiar with, and consider themselves expert in coping with.

A similar robustness characterized the reaction to a handful of purely theological statements made by some Christian fundamentalist preachers. These statements were to the effect that, when Jesus returns to the world, only Christians will qualify for redemption—Jews and other infidels need not apply. As it happens, Jewish theological teachings do not recognize the doctrine of a second coming of Jesus (or a first), so it is hard to see why Jews should take such offense at these statements. It is almost as if Jewish organizations, having fought (quite successfully) against Jewish exclusion from country clubs, now feel it necessary to take on the specter of discrimination in that Great Country Club in the Sky.

Still, even anti-Semitism cannot be counted on to restore a sense of purpose to the major Jewish institutions. The most blatant and vicious form of anti-Semitism in this country now emanates from the black community—and, incredibly, from black college students, black professors, and black preachers. This was not supposed to happen, and it has plunged Jewish organizations, with their predominantly liberal orientation, into a deep quandary of indecision.

For several decades now, the official Jewish community has sincerely believed that it enjoys a strong alliance with black organizations. After all, Jewish money was always forthcoming to the Urban League, the NAACP, and the United Negro College Fund. And were it not for affirmative action, which the Jewish community has generally supported, many of today's black students would not even be in college, nor would their black professors be ensconced in their black-studies departments.

So is today's black anti-Semitism another instance of the rule that no good deed goes unpunished? No, it is not. What we have here, rather, is a case of ideological folly reaping its unanticipated consequences. It is precisely *because* of the extensive Jewish involvement in black organizational life that black anti-Semitism is so virulent today. It is because Jewish officialdom has been a "patron" of blacks that a frustrated and racist black nationalism has turned against the Jewish community.

The so-called "black-Jewish alliance" goes back to the early days of the struggle for black civil rights, a struggle in which Jews properly played a significant role, since civil rights is always a Jewish issue. The notion of an inherent alliance be-

Irving Kristol is co-editor of the *Public Interest*, publisher of the *National Interest*, and the author of, among other books, *Two Cheers for Capitalism* and *Reflections of a Neoconservative*. His articles in Commentary include "The Future of American Jewry" (August 1991) and "Liberalism & American Jews" (October 1988).

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tween the two communities survived the successful outcome of that struggle. Being liberal as well as Jewish, leaders of the Jewish community thought it natural that they should continue helping blacks achieve something like "real" (i.e., socioeconomic) equality.

Yet the liberal policies that were supposed to accomplish this goal have helped to create a black underclass and a demoralized black community. Despite the fact that old-line "civil-rights leaders" continue to demand more of the same, younger blacks, especially those drawn to one variety or another of black nationalism, are well aware of what welfare-state liberalism has done to their community. Black anti-Semitism today is a reaction to that liberal failure, and Jews, being so highly identified with liberalism, happen to make the most convenient target.

Among black university students caught up in the revolt against welfare-state liberalism, the situation is coming more and more to resemble that of German university students in the 1930's. Their rebelliousness in the name of racial dignity and self-affirmation has a strong thuggish component, and is far closer to authentic fascism than anything we have seen since the 1930's. Since blacks make up only 11 percent of the population, they do not constitute any kind of real threat to American democracy. But the phenomenon of black anti-Semitism, which is a surrogate for black contempt and hatred for whites, and especially liberal whites, seems to have a ring of permanence. It is a passion that is even now reshaping the NAACP and the old-line black caucus in Congress, and it also marks a major turning point in American Jewish history—precisely because it so effectively challenges the historic commitment of American Jews to the ideal of a universalist, secular liberalism.

That triple loyalty—to Judaism, secularism, and liberalism—no longer seems as unproblematic as it once did. Indeed, the dissolution of the black-Jewish alliance, of whose very existence only a handful of blacks were ever aware, is a sign of the break-up of the larger liberal coalition, a coalition that is now mainly a Jewish illusion.

True, labor unions with a substantial black membership—the teachers' unions, for instance, or the social-workers' unions—can still be counted on to pass resolutions deploring anti-Semitism; but they are reluctant to pass a resolution denouncing Louis Farrakhan by name. And on the campuses, members of the newest Left, consisting of gays, lesbians, and radical feminists, are working to ally themselves with black "militancy" (notwithstanding the homophobia often associated with such militancy). About Jews and anti-Semitism they could not care less.

As the categories of "Left" and "Right" become hopelessly confused in postmodern politics, many people on the Left have begun to talk the language of fascism without knowing it, just as many black nationalists have unknowingly begun to act like fascists. Liberalism, bewildered by this new situation, is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. That leaves the major Jewish organizations, heavily populated by liberals, trapped in anachronistic modes of thinking.

Some of these organizations already devote more attention to their liberal agenda than to their Jewish one. Thus, although the rate of abortion among Jewish women is far lower than in any other religious or ethnic group, a mass-membership organization like Hadassah has, in recent years, been more deeply engaged with the issue of abortion than with the issue of intermarriage. Or again, the leaders of some organizations find it easy to be for "choice," but find it more difficult to cope with promiscuity (a.k.a. "sexual activism") among their own children. Which is to say that, like liberalism itself, they are morally adrift. If two decades ago anyone had predicted that the major Jewish organizations would one day see nothing wrong with handing out condoms to students in junior high school, he would have been laughed out of court.

The one constant in this professional mindset is the suspicion and fear of Christianity—and of conservatism. In both cases the suspicion and fear are based on atavistic European memories that have little relevance to the American Jewish condition. When it is pointed out that Christians in America today appear to be more interested in marrying Jews than in persecuting them, the rejoinder is quickly made that it is not *those* Christians who frighten Jews. It is the more devout ("orthodox") Christians, who keep talking about Jesus, and salvation, and even Armageddon. Such Christians, for the most part, do not want to marry Jews—a fact that in itself is taken as a symptom of potential anti-Semitism.

This brings us to the heart of the confusion with which we began. A plain and simple truth is that so long as Christians are willing and eager to marry Jews, and Jews to marry (secular) Christians, intermarriage will proceed apace. But another truth, not so plain and not so simple, is that while Jews are distressed by this situation, they are also flattered and reassured by it. One gets the impression that what many Jewish leaders want, ideally, is for Jews to remain Jewish, and to decline to marry the Christians who woo them—but *not* for Christians to be so Christian as to shy away from intermarriage with Jews. It is an impossible dream, reflecting the paradoxical situation in which American Jews find themselves today.

Meanwhile, the Jewish population as a proportion of the whole steadily declines. It is numbers that count, and Jewish numbers will count less and less. By the year 2000, just around the corner, the Mormon population, having tripled in the past two decades, will be greater than the Jewish population.

As for the evangelical Christians, they increase

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steadily and will soon be the dominant force in American Christianity. By contrast, the "mainline" churches, steadfast in their social agenda and their own liberal-Left commitments, continue to lose adherents; but they also continue to be the favorite churches of the institutional Jewish community—favorite because less aggressively Christian. Although there are signs of change in this area, as at least some Jewish organizations tentatively pursue an "opening" to the evangelicals, in general the Jewish-Christian liberal coalition is going down the path of the Jewish-black coalition, if for different reasons.

Or for some of the same reasons. Right now, for instance, some black preachers and educators, alarmed at the demoralization of black youth, are becoming enthusiastic advocates of prayer in the public schools. On this issue, as on many others, Jews find themselves increasingly isolated in their secular liberalism.

They are isolated, too, in their Jewish universalism, a compound of grandiose moralism and messianic self-intoxication. Ever since the French Revolution, the "Jewish message" of universal justice in an ideal world has been interpreted as a political prescription for the real world. A secularized version of this message is the very heart and soul of Jewish liberalism. But the message now rings ever more hollow, as political messianism itself is drained of all credibility.

IF EVER there was a moment for Jews to turn inward, to think about their condition and their prospects in a more Christian America, that moment is now.

In recent years, all the major Jewish organizations have quite suddenly decided that Jewish education is the solution to the problem of intermarriage. It is, if anything is. But what Jewish education means is itself a problem. Although more American Jews are sending their children to Jewish all-day schools, especially where the public schools are both unsafe and unfit for learning, the numbers are still too small to affect the overall picture. And in any case, most American Jews are not happy at the thought of parochial schools. They fear the taint of "ghettoization."

What happens in these schools is almost infinitely various. The Orthodox, of course, are a case apart; for most of them, the possibility of intermarriage is too remote to shape educational thinking. The more conservative of the Conservative schools work hard to teach Hebrew, to familiarize their students with the Jewish holidays and the more salient prayers, and to establish a sense of kinship with Jews everywhere, and especially in Israel. The Reform schools—a relatively recent phenomenon—emphasize a liberal social agenda accompanied by a smattering of Jewish learning.

We do not yet know just how significant will be the impact of Jewish day schools, through the high-school level, on the rate of intermarriage. Two separate studies done in 1993 conclude that Jewish education correlates positively with involvement in Jewish causes, and does act as a brake on intermarriage. But it is too early to tell. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the products of Jewish day schools quickly assimilate into the secular youth culture. When they go on to college, many—always excepting the Orthodox—may end up retaining only a vestigial connection with their Jewish heritage.

True, one can envisage a Jewish school system running right through the college years, and this might have a very marked effect. But that too is hardly a realistic prospect at the moment. It would be taken as suggesting a kind of voluntary resegregation, and segregation is what American Jews have fought against throughout their history. The official Jewish community would have to become a lot more "Jewish" than it is today for such a system of higher education to be allotted the resources it would need. Until that day dawns, relying solely on Jewish day schools to slow down the rate of intermarriage may be less than realistic. Still, as the only game in town, it is a move in the right direction.

THE liberalism of the last two centuries liberated Jews from the ghetto and enlisted them as civic equals in Western society. The new challenge Jews will have to face is just how to live as equals in American society without committing demographic suicide.

They can best confront this challenge by seeing it as an opportunity, not simply a problem. The opportunity is one for the American Jewish community to reestablish a Jewish core, a religious core, as a key to its identity. That is what many Christians today are seeking as our secular society continues to unravel, and there is every reason to think that Jews, willy-nilly, will be propelled in the same direction.

That does not mean that they will thereby instantaneously give up on their liberalism. So thoroughly does the liberal culture dominate attitudes in the Jewish community that even a turn inward, toward religion, may well become hostage, at least temporarily, to the liberal ethos. Thus, among rabbinical students at non-Orthodox seminaries in recent years, there has been a remarkable upswing in religious observance and a palpable move "rightward" in matters of ritual and liturgical practice. But this growing religious conservatism often goes hand-in-hand with a conventional liberal attitude about everything else, from racial politics to rock music to abortion, feminism, and homosexuality. It will be interesting to see whether the contradictions entailed in this adaptive maneuver can long survive.

In any event, being Jewish in a multiracial, multiethnic, and religiously pluralist society is the challenge of the hour. Or, to be more precise: the challenge is to find a way of incorporating the crucial religious dimension of "being Jewish" into American life.

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Partial Justice

Mary Ann Glendon

As late as the early 1960's, Justice William O. Douglas was widely regarded as a disgrace to the bench even by many lawyers who shared his social and economic views. Douglas's contempt for legal craftsmanship was seen as sloppiness; his visionary opinions were taken as evidence that he was angling for the presidency; and his solicitude for those he considered underdogs was perceived as favoritism.

By the end of the 1960's, however, a new and very romantic ideal of judging had begun to take shape. In eulogies, tributes, law-review articles, and legal journalism, judges began to be praised for qualities that would once have been considered problematic: compassion rather than impartiality, boldness rather than restraint, creativity rather than craftsmanship, and specific results regardless of the effect on the legal order as a whole. In the 1990's, Douglas would surely have basked in the "Greenhouse Effect"—a term (named after the *New York Times*'s Linda Greenhouse) for the warm reciprocity between activist journalists and judges who meet their approval.

This great change was set into motion by the appointment of Earl Warren as Chief Justice in 1953. President Eisenhower's choice of Warren was an unusual move, for the new Chief Justice had spent almost all his professional life in electoral politics. After serving as California's attorney general, he became a power in the state Republican party and then a popular governor. He was Thomas E. Dewey's running mate in 1948, and a serious contender for the Republican presidential nomination himself in 1952.

Nothing in Warren's background had prepared him for the fine-gauge work of opinion writing. He was impatient with the need to ground a desired outcome in constitutional text or tradition. As described by an admirer, Warren was a man who brushed off legal and historical impediments to the results he felt were right; he was not a "look-it-up-in-the-library" type.

What he was, above all, was a statesman, and although scholars may argue about its foundations in constitutional text and tradition, the Warren Court's decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* was indeed a great act of statesmanship. Those academics who downplay the importance of *Brown* in the struggle for racial justice have underrated its effects on attitudes about race relations—effects that in turn helped to bring about important political changes like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and voting-rights legislation. The Warren Court laid its prestige on the line in a bid not only to dismantle official segregation, but to delegitimate racially discriminatory attitudes. That wager was successful. Though racial prejudice has not been eradicated, it has no respectability at all in contemporary American society.

The effects of *Brown* on the legal profession and on the legal order as a whole were another matter. And here it was not Warren but William Brennan, appointed to the Supreme Court by Eisenhower in 1956, who came to incarnate those less salutary effects most fully.

Brennan was of humble origins. The son of Irish immigrants, he made his way to Harvard Law School—encouraged by his trade-unionist father who told him that a lawyer could do a lot for working people. Brennan did go into labor law, but enlisted on the other side of the cause that had meant so much to his father. After some years as a successful corporate practitioner in New Jersey, he became a trial judge and rose in time to the New Jersey Supreme Court. On the U.S. Supreme Court, he became a towering hero to those who shared his view that the Court had not only the power but the duty to promote social and political change.

Described by his biographer, Kim Eisler, as neither the most brilliant nor the best writer on the Court, Brennan during his long tenure may nevertheless have had the most influence on the general direction of its decisions. Few lawyers would disagree with the *New Yorker*'s evaluation, on Brennan's retirement in 1990, that he had come "to personify the expansion of the role of the judiciary in American life."

Even toward the end of his career, as the composition and mood of the Court changed, Brennan was often able to beat the odds and further his vision. As portrayed by Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong in *The Brethren*, Brennan

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"cajoled in conference, walked the halls constantly and worked the phones, polling and plotting strategy with his allies." In later years, when his colleagues declined to follow him on such excursions as judicially banning capital punishment or abolishing the custom of prayer at the opening of legislative sessions, Brennan went out on the hustings, calling on state courts to take up the cudgels.

In speeches and writings, Brennan encouraged state judges to exercise their powers of constitutional review in new and creative ways. State courts, he pointed out, could interpret their own constitutions so as to provide even more rights than are afforded under the federal Constitution. Like the fox in Aesop's fable, the wily Brennan *cajoled whole flocks of jurists into dropping their* reserve. "State courts cannot rest," he wrote, "when they have afforded their citizens the full protections of the federal Constitution. State constitutions, too, are a font of individual liberties, their protections often extending beyond those afforded by the Supreme Court's interpretation of federal law."

Unlike many adventurous judges, Brennan had well-developed views of judging and did not mind discussing them. Here he is in a 1988 essay:

> The Constitution is fundamentally a public text—the monumental charter of a government and a people—and a Justice of the Supreme Court must apply it to resolve public controversies. For, from our beginnings, a most important consequence of the constitutionally created separation of powers has been the American habit, extraordinary to other democracies, of casting social, economic, philosophical, and political questions in the form of lawsuits, in an attempt to secure ultimate resolution by the Supreme Court. . . . Not infrequently, these are the issues on which contemporary society is most deeply divided. They arouse our deepest emotions. The main burden of my 29 years on the Supreme Court has thus been to wrestle with the Constitution in this heightened public context, to draw meaning from the text in order to resolve public controversies.

That passage can instructively be compared with views often expressed in the past by Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis D. Brandeis. Holmes insisted that legislatures, no less than courts, were the ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people. "About 75 years ago," he said as a very old man, "I learned that I was not God. And so, when the people want to do something I can't find anything in the Constitution expressly forbidding them to do, I say, whether I like it or not, 'Goddammit, let 'em do it.' "

Brandeis for his part emphasized that, where vexing social problems were concerned, it would often be more advantageous to leave state and local governments free to experiment than to impose uniform and untested federal mandates upon the entire country. The states, he said, were like "laboratories" where innovative approaches to novel problems could be tested and refined or rejected.

Although one of the opinions of which Brennan was proudest was on legislative reapportionment, he maintained an uncharacteristic silence on the role of the elected branches in resolving the issues on which "society is most deeply divided." The reason must be that the way he saw his own life's work, as indicated in the above passage, put him in direct competition with the popular branches. Quoting Justice Robert Jackson, he made no bones about his position that, right or wrong, the Court was to have the last word: "The Justices are certainly aware that we are not final because we are infallible; we know that we are infallible because we are final."

Brennan's approach to judging could not be more remote in spirit from Holmes's structural restraint. Nor did Brennan have much use for the prudent avoidance of the appearance of judicial imperialism that was characteristic of the first great shaper of the Court, John Marshall. Brennan did not hesitate to claim, regarding the Court's powers: "The course of vital social, economic, and political currents may be directed."

Energized and prodded to no small degree by Brennan, majorities on the Warren and Burger Courts actively pursued a high-minded vision of empowering those individuals and groups they perceived as disadvantaged. When deference to the elected branches served those ends, as in many affirmative-action cases, Brennan deferred as humbly as any classical judge. When the decisions of councils or legislatures got in his way, he invoked expansive interpretations of constitutional language to brush them aside.

While Brennan was not one to let text or tradition stand in the way of a desired result, he knew how to turn his corners squarely. But he did not share the devotion to judicial craftsmanship that characterized the work of colleagues like John Marshall Harlan or Byron White. Nor did he show much concern about the probable side-effects of a desired result in a particular case on the separation of powers, federal-state relations, or the long-term health of political processes and institutions. With respect to such matters, he was impatient with what he considered to be abstractions and technicalities.

When it came to compassion, Brennan had plenty for those he made (or wished to make) winners, but he showed little sensitivity toward those he ruled against. His heart went out to Native Americans when a Court majority permitted the federal government to build a road through sacred Indian places on public land. But in striking down a longstanding and successful New York City program providing remedial math and reading teachers to poor, special-needs children in religious schools, Brennan was pitiless. It

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took a dissent by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to point out that the majority ruling, written by Brennan, had sacrificed the needs and prospects of 20,000 children from the poorest families in New York, and thousands more disadvantaged children across the country, for the sake of a maximalist version of the principle of separation of church and state.

THE new model of bold, assertive judging has also had its exemplars in the lower courts. One federal appellate judge famed for his crusading decisions was the late J. Skelley Wright. Looking back on his role in expanding landlords' liability for the condition of leased premises, he wrote in 1982:

> I didn't like what I saw, and I did what I could to ameliorate, if not eliminate, the injustice involved in the way many of the poor were required to live in the nation's capital. I offer no apology for not following more closely the legal precedents which had cooperated in creating the conditions that I found unjust.

The romantic ideal also fired the imaginations of judges in the capillaries of the legal system, the sites of the everyday administration of justice described in *The Federalist* as "the great cement of society." A longtime District of Columbia Superior Court judge, Sylvia Bacon, told the American Society for Public Administration that "There is a sense among judges that there are wrongs to be righted and that it is their responsibility to do it." As for the role of the Constitution and the law in guiding the judge's sense of right and wrong, Judge Bacon brusquely remarked: "Legal reasons are often just a cover for a ruling in equity (basic fairness)."

By "fairness," Judge Bacon apparently did not mean anything so prosaic as keeping an open mind to the arguments, and applying the relevant law without regard to the identity of the litigants and without regard to a particular outcome. Her notion was more visceral: "Plain and simple sense of outrage by the judge." Such views were no impediment to Judge Bacon's election to a seat on the American Bar Association's board of governors in the 1980's.

Yet they would have been anathema to the Founders, for whom impartiality was the *sine qua non* of judicial justice. Massachusetts, adopting John Adams's words, built the concept into its Bill of Rights:

> It is essential to the preservation of the rights of every individual, his life, liberty, property, and character, that there be an impartial interpretation of the laws, and administration of justice. It is the right of every citizen to be tried by judges as free, impartial, and independent as the lot of humanity will admit.

From the early years of the Republic to the present day, every American judge has taken a vow to carry out his duties without fear or favor:

> I do solemnly swear that I will administer justice without respect to persons, do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me, according to the best of my abilities and understanding agreeably to the Constitution and laws of the United States, so help me God.

Some critics of the world view implicit in this oath say that judging "without respect to persons" can lead to inhumane results by ignoring important differences—between men and women, rich and poor, black and white, strong and weak. If the critics had their way, the oath would be revised to read something like this:

> I affirm that I will administer justice with careful attention to the individual characteristics of the parties, that I will show compassion to those I deem disadvantaged, and that I will discharge my duties according to my personal understanding of the Constitution, the laws of the United States, and such higher laws as may be revealed to me.

Besides, the critics observe, impartiality is often just a mask covering various sorts of bias. They point to historical research that has found more than a little clay on the feet of classical idols. It may well have been Holmes's obnoxious eugenic views, for example, rather than his vaunted restraint, that prompted him to uphold a state statute providing for the forced sterilization of mental patients—with the cruel comment that "three generations of imbeciles are enough."

But are judicial compassion and responsiveness viable substitutes for the elusive ideal of impartiality? Few would dispute that judges should be able to empathize with the people who come before them. But in the early years of this century, adventurous judges were extremely tender-hearted toward big business, while showing little compassion for women and children working long hours in factories.

LET US acknowledge that until someone figures out how to make judges from other than human material, neither classical nor romantic feet will be a pretty sight. The real question, then, is which judicial attributes, systematically cultivated, offer the most protection against arbitrariness and bias.

Whatever one may conclude about the right mix of qualities for the special circumstances of the Supreme Court, it is hard to imagine that the routine administration of justice can benefit from an increase of compassion at the expense of impartiality. A close-knit, relatively homogeneous community can perhaps get along with a system where village elders reach decisions on the basis of their personal sense of fairness and their informed concern for the parties and the community. But that pastoral model cannot serve for an ethnically and ideologically diverse nation where litigants are strangers to the judge

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and often to each other. Under such conditions, the liberties and fortunes of citizens cannot be left to the mercy of each judge's personal sense of what procedures are fair, what outcome is just, who needs protection, and who deserves compassion.

The combination of subjective judging and an elected judiciary is an especially unhappy one. In the 40 states where elections play a role in selecting or retaining some or all judges, the American Judicature Society reports that problems related to campaign advertising and financing are serious and worsening. What does it portend for a judge's impartiality when his election ads look just like a district attorney's: "Tough on Crime"? Or for her independence when she accepts large campaign contributions from lawyers who regularly appear in her court?

For cynics who maintain that judicial independence and impartiality are simply a sham, the logical move is to select judges according to their ideological leanings. But that is a dicey business—and not only because "sensitivity" and "compassion" are easier to fake than intelligence and integrity. The problem with subjective judging is that, sooner or later, the tables are apt to be turned when ambitious judges with the "wrong" ideas ascend to the bench. That is why many journalists and legal academics who once cheered the progress of assertive judging on the Supreme Court had second thoughts as the composition of the Court changed.

But why should the country's response to an old problem flagged by Alexander Hamilton—the scarcity of individuals with the requisite skill and integrity—be to accept a thoroughly politicized judiciary? One alternative that has worked well for some liberal democracies is a meritocratic civil-service judiciary, staffed with graduates of judicial-training academies. But we need not depart so radically from our own traditions. Surely our wise course is to insist on judges who have demonstrated a capacity for self-restraint (structural, interpretive, and personal) as well as a commitment to the time-honored judicial practices that help to promote those qualities.

The relevant skill is to maintain principled continuity in the system, while deciding particular cases in a way that even the losing party can accept as fair. No one is born with that sort of virtuosity. But Anglo-American judges over centuries have developed numerous safeguards against lapses and partiality. Chief among them is the requirement that a judge expose his reasoning in a written opinion. Since a perfectly reasoned opinion may rest on arbitrary premises, a judge is also expected to explain the facts and principles on which each decision is based and to follow those principles consistently in future cases.

Such technical skills in the judiciary are more necessary than ever, given the complexities of current economic and social conditions. And yet the supply of competent judges at all levels is indirectly threatened by several habits associated with adventurous judging.

As every lawyer knows, part of an appellate court's work involves maintaining a reasonable degree of coherence and predictability in the law. If that unglamorous but crucial task is not performed well, the courts falter in their fundamental obligation to decide like cases alike. Practitioners then stumble, too, for they cannot give reliable advice to clients who are trying to plan for the future, or to decide whether to prosecute, defend, or settle claims.

It has, however, become steadily more difficult for appellate judges to ensure reasonable reckonability and coherence in the legal system. Legislatures and administrative agencies rarely take the trouble to fit new statutes and regulations into the framework of existing law. Rather, they leave it up to judges to make some sense of a welter of federal, state, and local enactments that are often conflicting or overlapping—some overly detailed, others airily vague. The intellectual difficulty of many of these cases surpasses anything that ever came before Marshall's Court in the early days of the Republic. In consequence, the quality most required of an appellate judge is often a craftsman's art and painstaking care.

Thus it is a cause for concern that specialists in areas like tax, antitrust, labor, pensions, maritime law, insurance, social security, patents, trademarks, and copyrights increasingly complain of a decline in judicial workmanship.

After all, what will be left of the principle that like cases should be decided alike if every judge feels free to brush aside precedents, statutes, and bargained-for contractual provisions as mere technicalities? What will be the effect on the economy if our present imperfectly functioning system degenerates into a nonsystem, a chaotic heap of idiosyncratic decisions? Are we really ready for the rank-and-file judiciary to cast off restraints that rested lightly on the shoulders of men like Holmes and Learned Hand? For judges who slip the mailed fist of power into the velvet glove of compassion?

In constitutional cases, romantic judging also exacts a toll on the democratic elements in our form of government. When Warren and Burger Court majorities converted the Constitution's safety valves (the Bill of Rights, due process, equal protection) into engines with judges at the controls, they wreaked havoc with grass-roots politics. The dismal failures of many local authorities in dealing with racial issues became pretexts for depriving citizens everywhere of the power to experiment with new approaches to a wide range of problems that often take different forms in different parts of the country. Constitutional provisions designed to protect individuals and minorities against majoritarian excesses were increasingly used to block the normal processes through which citizens build coalitions, develop

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consensus, hammer out compromises, try out new ideas, learn from mistakes, and try again.

Elected officials have offered little resistance to judicial inroads on their powers. On hot issues, they often are only too happy to be taken off the hook by the courts. But each time a court sets aside an action of the political branches through free-wheeling interpretation, self-government suffers a setback. Political skills atrophy. People cease to take citizenship seriously. Citizens with diverse points of view lose the habit of cooperating to set conditions under which all can flourish. Adversarial legalism supplants the sober legalistic spirit that, in the 19th century, Alexis de Tocqueville admired in the American people. For, as Abraham Lincoln warned,

> if the policy of the government, upon vital questions, affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, . . . the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having, to that extent, practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal.

IN RETROSPECT, one can see that the rise of bold judging proceeded for the most part with good intentions. Earlier in the century, state-court judges often had to take the initiative to keep judge-made law abreast of social and economic changes. In the wake of the New Deal, federal judges had to improvise techniques for dealing with regulatory law. Then in *Brown*—and also in the one-man, one-vote cases—the Supreme Court had to exercise statesmanship in addressing legal aspects of the country's most pressing social problems.

The achievements of gifted judges in meeting those challenges made it difficult for some of them—as well as for their less capable colleagues—to resist the impulse to keep on doing justice by their own lights. That those lights were not always powered by authoritative sources was easy to disguise, even from themselves. It was a case of successes leading to temptations, of a good thing taken to extremes.

In finding our way back from these extremes, the beginning of wisdom is to recognize that, whatever the pros and cons of adventurous judging by the Supreme Court on momentous occasions, romantic ideals are a poor guide to how judges throughout the system should comport themselves as a general matter. The unique political role of the nation's highest court may require its members at times to show the sorts of excellence that are traditionally associated with executives or legislators—energy, leadership, boldness. But, day in and day out, those qualities are no substitute for the ordinary heroism of sticking to one's last, of demonstrating impartiality, interpretive skill, and responsibility toward authoritative sources in the regular administration of justice.

As things now stand in the topsy-turvy world of legal journalism, however, a judge will win no plaudits for such heroism, and may even earn contempt for not being interesting enough. When Byron White stepped down from the Supreme Court in 1993, the *New Republic*'s cover story called him "a perfect cipher." Admitting that White was "a first-rate legal technician," a writer for that magazine sneered at him for being "uninterested in articulating a constitutional vision." To this writer, it was evidence of White's "mediocrity" that he was hard to classify as a liberal or a conservative.

What made White hard to classify, of course, were the very qualities that made him an able and conscientious judge—his independence and his faithfulness to a modest conception of the judicial role. His "vision," implicit in nearly every one of his opinions, was not that difficult to discern. As summed up by a former clerk, it was one

> in which the democratic process predominates over the judicial; [and] the role of the Court or any individual Justice is not to promote particular ideologies, but to decide cases in a pragmatic way that permits the political branches to shoulder primary responsibility for governing our society. . . . The purpose of an opinion . . . is quite simply to decide the case in an intellectually and analytically sound manner.

Though White's competence, independence, and integrity did not make for lively copy, he was a model of modern neoclassical judging. As for the future, it is heartening that White's replacement, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, took the occasion of a speech shortly after her appointment to embrace the model of the "good judge" as represented by Learned Hand. Quoting Hand's biographer, Justice Ginsburg said:

> The good judge is "open-minded and detached . . . heedful of limitations stemming from the judge's own competence and, above all, from the presuppositions of our constitutional scheme; [the good] judge . . . recognizes that a felt need to act only interstitially does not mean relegation of judges to a trivial or mechanical role, but rather affords the most responsible room for creative, important judicial contributions."

As Justice Ginsburg's former colleague Robert Bork has observed, the key check on judicial authoritarianism will always be the judge's own understanding of the scope and limits of judicial power—and the insistence of a vigilant citizenry on having judges who will resist the temptation to remake the constitutional design for government and who will wholeheartedly comply with the judicial oath's promise to do equal justice without respect to persons.

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Naipaul's World

Philip Gourevitch

THE distinguished writer V.S. Naipaul opens his new book, *A Way in the World**—it is his 22nd—with a brief "Prelude" (subtitled "An Inheritance") in which he describes the constant "shifting about of reality" he experiences whenever he returns home to the island of Trinidad. Reencountering familiar places and people, he finds "everything strange and not strange," and the dance of his perceptions gives him a feeling of "half-dream, knowing and not knowing, . . . a little like the sensations that came to me as a child when once in the rainy season, I had 'fever.' "

Reflecting on this state, Naipaul recalls a story he has heard about a man named Leonard Side, a floral arranger who also works as a dresser of bodies in a Trinidad funeral home and a maker and decorator of pastries. Side is an eccentric, and his decorative tastes seem eccentric: although a Muslim, he keeps an image of "Christ in Majesty" over his bed. The woman who tells Naipaul this story confesses that each time she sees Side, she runs away from him. "It was his idea of beauty that upset me," she explains:

> That idea of beauty—mixing roses and flowers and nice things to eat with the idea of making the dead human body beautiful too—was contrary to my own idea. The mixing of things upset me. . . . I felt his feeling for beauty was like an illness.

Naipaul, too, has often expressed dismay at the mixing of things, and he too has fled from the world of Leonard Side. He "escaped" his native Trinidad—as he likes to say—when he was eighteen, in 1950, to study at Oxford on a scholarship, and he has made his home in England ever since. Returning time and again, in his writings and his travels, to the Caribbean, Africa, and India, he has brought an unsentimental eye and ear to bear on the post-colonial world of his inheritance.

His approach has been to sort out, rather than to celebrate, the third-world mixing and fragmentation of cultures, histories, religions, languages, castes, ideologies, and ethnicities. Against this confusion, Naipaul has posited his own rigorous discipline of dissecting the dissonant medley back into its essential elements so that it can be known and understood. For, despite his seemingly effortless prose, vivid descriptive powers, and deft mastery of narrative form, Naipaul has always been less interested in pursuing beauty than truth.

In *A Way in the World*, however, Naipaul chooses to identify as much with Leonard Side as with the woman. His project is simultaneously to construct his own literary inheritance and the legacy he will leave to the world. The book, which was published in England with the subtitle "A Sequence" (and in America, somewhat misleadingly, as "A Novel"), combines memoir, historical scholarship, and imaginative writing in a series of nine independent but thematically interlocking narratives. These narratives accumulate to form a dramatic portrait gallery of people—historical and fictionalized—whose lives have been formed and transformed by their encounters with Trinidad. And through the echo chamber of their stories there emerges a portrait of the artist, Naipaul himself, at the apex of his literary consciousness.

Taken by itself, the book is a compelling and informative compendium of contemplative storytelling about the struggle of men—there are scarcely any women—to enter and alter the history into which they are born. Yet *A Way in the World* is also clearly composed as a coda to Naipaul's previous writings—and, at times, a corrective. To understand where the writer is going in its pages, it is worthwhile first to consider where he has come from.

BORN in British colonial Trinidad in 1932, the grandson of an Uttar Pradesh Brahmin who had come to the island as an indentured servant, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul began his career as a writer in exile, in London in the late 1950's. His early novels, particularly *A House for Mr. Biswas*, the masterpiece which established his reputation in 1961, were dark but affectionately comic chronicles of the aspirations and humiliations of Trinidad's East Indian community. *A House for Mr. Biswas* is invariably honored by the label "Dickensian," and its application of the broad canvas and intimate

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descriptive detail of 19th-century realism to the new terrain of the Caribbean colonies won the author praise both as an up-and-comer on the old English scene and as a great novelty—the indisputably authentic voice of a previously unsung colonial experience.

The timing could not have been better: Trinidad had been granted provisional independence in 1957, and became fully independent in 1962. With the collapse of empire, Naipaul's early writings seemed to confirm the liberal faith that the natives in the colonies would quickly blossom forth with vibrant, modern, Western-friendly cultures. What few of his fans seemed to notice at first was that Naipaul was himself deeply skeptical of such pious idealism.

Not that he was a critic of independence, or a booster of empire: he has always been a champion of autonomy and a chronicler of the corruption of conquerers. But while most writing on the third world continued to fight yesterday's battles against imperialism, Naipaul soon moved on to the next stage of the drama, the predicament of people who sought to fill in the blanks left by the withdrawal of the old order. Throughout the rest of the 1960's and the 1970's, Naipaul became a tireless traveler through the third world, and in volume after volume he produced a harrowing portrait of the post-colonial scene.

In novels like *The Mimic Men*, *In a Free State*, *Guerrillas*, and *A Bend in the River*, and in works of nonfiction reportage like *The Middle Passage*, *An Area of Darkness*, *The Return of Eva Peron*, *with The Killings in Trinidad*, and *India: A Wounded Civilization*, Naipaul exposed the desperate unpreparedness for self-rule that haunted third-world nations. Imported corruption had given way to homegrown corruption, a debilitating cycle of revolutions and counterrevolutions, and Naipaul was merciless in his examination of the price paid by his characters for their mislaid hopes in tyrannical personality cults, terrorism, religious fundamentalism, and a half-baked potluck of Marxist and nationalist ideologies.

Unafraid of the politically-incorrect word "primitive," Naipaul portrayed the post-colonials as people without a guiding sense of history, who had passed from millennia in the bush, through centuries of colonial humiliation, to emerge at the dawn of independence with barely a clue as to how to conduct themselves in the contemporary world. The resulting anarchy, as he described it most succinctly in his report on the Ivory Coast, "The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro," bore less resemblance to any modern politics than to the ancient, and largely fragmented, spirit cultures of animistic, magic-driven, fetish religions.

Everywhere he looked, Naipaul saw the return of the "bush." And as an Indian from predominantly black Trinidad, he evinced a special sensitivity to that most taboo of post-colonial topics, the racial injustices of the third world. By the 1970's, liberal idealism among many Western intellectuals had given way to revolutionary, Africanist, and black-power politics; against such theorizing, Naipaul painted the new "race-men" as murderous charlatans.

It is hardly surprising, then, that there was a backlash against Naipaul from leftist critics. What is surprising is how long it took them to recognize that the great native voice of the West Indies was not exactly on their side. In 1967, when he published *The Mimic Men*, a chilling novel about fraudulent politics in a newly independent Caribbean country, he won England's highly prestigious Booker Prize. It took twelve years and the novel that would prove to be his most famous to date, *A Bend in the River*—a tale of life in the hinterlands of an African country plagued by successively brutal revolutions—before it finally became clear that politics would probably prevent him from moving up the short list for the Nobel Prize which he so obviously deserved.

Ironically, of the two books, *The Mimic Men* is the more purely political, and its characters are more overtly corrupt and unsympathetic. Its brilliance, however, lies in Naipaul's pursuit, through every nook and cranny of his characters' lives, of the title concept—that the former colonials had made a hash of their dreams of autonomy by mimicking the colonists and seeking to take their place, rather than by establishing an original response to their original circumstances.

Naipaul's lament was all the more poignant because, as a post-colonial himself engaged in a quest for autonomy, he took the weaknesses he saw personally. He was not, after all, writing theoretically but rather from the depths of his own struggles when he limned the difficulty of originality in this sentence from *The Mimic Men*: "Industrialization, in territories like ours, seems to be a process of filling imported tubes and tins with various imported substances." Nor was he writing from on high when he opened *A Bend in the River* with the sentence: "The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it."

The threat of such nothingness haunts all Naipaul's writings. And because the obstacles his characters face are also his own, he refuses to excuse them, any more than the harsh reality they inhabit will excuse them, for their sloppiness and failures. As he put it to the author of a recent profile of him in the *New Yorker*:

> People are not intelligent enough in their analysis of what's wrong with their societies. They only know about their enemies. My attitude has always been different: that one must look inward and understand why one is weak, why a culture like mine or like the one in India, from which I come ancestrally—why they are so without protection in the world. And this has taken me to a higher global understanding of things.

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This unsentimental attitude, of course, only stokes the indignation of Naipaul's critics, who point out that his characters do not enjoy his advantages and critical distance from the circumstances that defeat them.

Yet those who lash out at Naipaul as an Anglophile mandarin, and condemn him for judging his characters too severely, simply are not reading closely. To begin with, although he may live, as he speaks, with a heavy Oxford accent, Naipaul has always had a distinctly New World vision; he has been from the first a hybrid writer of the Americas. And perhaps for this very reason, he listens with passionate attention to the cacophony of the world he describes.

Whether or not he agrees with or admires his characters, Naipaul invests them all—from bit players to the narrators who carry his finest stories—with strong, highly individual, and articulate voices. His third worlders are never noble savages, a concept for which he has no sympathy, but complex, subtle personalities whom he renders capable of, and responsible for, mature consciousness. Although their souls may be shattered and their intellects misguided, that they possess both soul and intellect is never in doubt. Such respectful generosity is all too rare among writers who have something of their own to say.

After two decades of publishing superlative fiction at an average rate of one book every other year, with nearly as much nonfiction in between, an interval of eight years passed after *A Bend in the River* before Naipaul produced his next book, *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987). That book, as much a memoir as a work of fiction, marked a significant departure. Leaving behind the third-world dictatorships of his middle period, he now wrote from the vantage point of the quiet Wiltshire cottage which had become his home. *The Enigma of Arrival* is less a drama than a narrative meditation on what Naipaul repeatedly has called his "journey" through life, as a private man and particularly as a developing writer.

He had worked this territory before, in *Finding the Center* (1984), a deeply affecting brief memoir of his early years, and in crisp asides throughout the rest of his books, moments of self-declaration when he had exposed the narrative apparatus in order to integrate the process of investigating and assembling into the story he was telling. In the final chapter of *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul describes how his original idea for the book evolved over time until

> The story had become more personal: my journey, the writer's journey, the writer defined by his writing discoveries, his ways of seeing, rather than by his personal adventures, writer and man separating at the beginning of the journey and coming together again in a second life just before the end.

Indeed, in the book's concluding chapter, the author has reached back to the world of *A House for Mr. Biswas* to draw his most nuanced picture yet of post-colonial complexity. Naipaul recounts how, at his sister's recent funeral in Trinidad, a distant in-law delivered a brief discourse on ancestral history, managing in just a few sentences to conflate events spanning four centuries. Instead of scolding the man for fabricating a "composite history," Naipaul reflects that "Men need history; it helps them to have an idea of who they are. But history, like sanctity, can reside in the heart; it is enough that there is something there."

Naipaul had hardly gone soft. Rather, he had identified in the words of his in-law a quality he shares—the power of the imagination to create a habitable reality. For it is not so much by Oxford and exile that Naipaul has removed himself from the mass of his fellow post-colonials, as by the ability to imagine himself—past, present, and future—complexly, exactingly, profoundly, and truly. In the absence of old orders, in a world of countless diasporas, individual imagination becomes for Naipaul the only instrument for forging the necessary original response to one's fate.

"Our sacred world had vanished," he writes in the final paragraph of *The Enigma of Arrival*:

> But we remade the world for ourselves; every generation does that, as we found when we came together for the death of this sister and felt the need to honor and remember. It forced us to look on death. It forced me to face the death I had been contemplating at night, in my sleep. . . . It showed me life and man as the mystery, the true religion of men, the grief and the glory.

Now, seven years later, in *A Way in the World*, Naipaul has dug deeper still into the human mystery and has produced what is certainly the crowning work of his maturity. At sixty-two, he has arrived at a point of summing up. For a lesser writer that would mean repeating himself. But although Naipaul revisits the scenes and concerns of many of his previous books, *A Way in the World* significantly broadens and deepens his view of "the grief and the glory."

It can be a dense and difficult book, and it is carefully constructed to resist easy classification or paraphrase. Each of the nine self-contained narratives feeds into the whole, not by plot but by thought and thematic echoes. Juxtaposing, in one volume, new versions of the sorts of stories he has told before, Naipaul retains his trademark clarity while achieving a resonant sense of the "shifting about of reality" and the "mixing of things" which he describes in the Prelude. In this way, the book's form mirrors the new theory of history Naipaul develops in its pages—history as a constant remaking and renaming of the world and of individual lives through simultaneous processes of displacement and accumulation.

This notion of history expands upon the vision

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put forward in the opening pages of Joseph Conrad's great novella "Heart of Darkness," when the narrator, Marlow, sits aboard a yacht on the Thames, brooding aloud: "And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth." Marlow explains that he is thinking of a time 1,900 years earlier, "when the Romans first came here," and he paints a verbal portrait of the commander of a trireme sailing up the Thames of old:

> Imagine him here—the very end of the world . . . cold, fog, tempests, disease, exile, and death—death skulking in the air, in the water, in the bush . . . the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed round him—all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men. . . .
>
> They [the Romans] were no colonists. . . . They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force . . . your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. . . . The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. . . .

Naipaul has spent most of his life looking into this unlovely business of conquest, and 50 pages into *A Way in the World* he reprises Marlow's vision, albeit with a complicating, late-20th-century twist. In a chapter entitled "New Clothes, An Unwritten Story," Naipaul develops a "writing idea" he claims to have had for a long time, a story which reads more like notes for a story, about a character called "the narrator," who is traveling by boat up "an unnamed river in a South American country."

The narrator is described as "a carrier of mischief. A revolutionary of the 1970's, say. A man seeking the help of upcountry Amerindians to overthrow the African government on the coast." As he journeys into the interior, he munches a piece of the local staple, cassava bread, and he reflects that cassava

> is a root, and it has a poison. It would have taken centuries for the remote ancestry of these forest people, after the crossing over of their ancestors from Asia, to have made their way down the continent to these forests and rivers. How many centuries more before the discovery of cassava? And how many centuries after that for the folk invention of the simple tools for getting rid of the poison?
>
> Thinking like this, thinking of all the inventions of those isolated people, the narrator begins to think of the antiquity of the forest. Not new, not virgin. Those villages on the river would have been like the towns of the classical world, rising for millennia on the middens of their predecessors.

Naipaul has reached much farther back than Marlow's 1,900 years—to a time before the last ice age—and, lunging forward again to the present, he has understood that even "aboriginal" peoples are infinitely removed from any truly original moment.

The message is plain: displacement, in space and in time, is the primal human experience. Under the circumstances, the quest for one's place, which was a central concern in *A Bend in the River*, is doomed to prove illusory. As the title of this new book suggests, Naipaul now seems to believe that the best one can hope for—and in his estimation it remains a great deal—is to find one's way.

Immediately after his cassava-bread reverie, Naipaul's "narrator" arrives at his destination, where

> [He] is startled to see two almost naked white boys with bows and the small Indian arrows hiding behind the grass and boulder at the water's edge. Not the arrows of the craft shops on the coast: the real arrows, from the forest. . . . There is no mystery: the children are from the new settlement in the clearing. They are playing at being Indians. The narrator is expected.

In a few deft strokes, Naipaul has again jumped—from the opening of "Heart of Darkness," with Marlow cogitating on the Thames, to the climax of that novella: Marlow's encounter with the great white hunter, Kurtz, who has gone native. And he has jumped beyond Conrad's early-20th-century view of the colonial world to the post-colonial inversions of century's end. "*They are playing at being Indians. The narrator is expected.*" The horror Kurtz found in the premodern jungle has become a masquerade, and as Naipaul unravels it in each new chapter of *A Way in the World*, the confusion of identities wrought by that displacement proves a very complicated echo chamber indeed.

NAIPAUL'S account spokes out from the hub of Trinidad to take in an astonishingly expansive global compass. Having conceived his writing life as a determined effort to salvage himself and his perceptions from annihilation, Naipaul turns his attention to others, mostly nonwriters, who have sought, like him, to be the authors of their fates.

The range of portraits is dazzling: here is Sir Walter Raleigh, sick and dying as his fraudulent claims of discovering El Dorado are exposed and he is sent home in chains to be executed; here is Blair, a government clerk in Trinidad, a colleague of the teenage Naipaul, who comes to a bad end nearly a half-century later as a diplomatic emissary set upon by racial thugs in a despotic East African country; here is Lebrun, a Trinidadian revolutionary on the run, at once a rabble-rouser and a serious intellectual for whom Naipaul shows genuine warmth and respect, even as Lebrun devolves into a puppet of himself; here is a transplanted Trinidadian East Indian living in Venezuela, who denies his origins in order to pass as a

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"new man," yet returns home when he has family troubles to observe the appropriate Hindu rituals; here is Foster Morris, an Englishman of the 30's who wrote a book of earnest social reportage about the Trinidad oil strikes, and later, living in England as a sour literary has-been, seeks to attach himself as a mentor to Naipaul's rising star; and here is Francisco Miranda, the ultimate mythomaniac, a failed 19th-century Venezuelan dreamer of South American revolution, who has worn so many false guises that his true self exists only in his long-lost journals.

Nobody is what at first he seems in Naipaul territory. Each of these men has fled his place of origin, shifted identities, and returned to find that he and the place are no longer what they were at parting. Yet if centuries of mixing have made the world Naipaul describes quite mad, his book is determinedly sane: he renders his characters in intimate realistic detail, charting their rises and falls with a detached but unmistakable sympathy. In *A Way in the World*, Naipaul has written a new kind of nonlinear history for a people who have not lived in a world of linear progressions.

At times, it is true, the burden of Naipaul's self-appointed task leads to clunky narrative strategies. The chapters on Sir Walter Raleigh and Francisco Miranda suffer from the sort of long expository monologues that plague so much historical drama. The details come fast and thick, and the voices seem indistinguishable. But while Naipaul can write too densely, he is incapable of being dull. Although most of the action described in the book takes place offstage, the bloody legacy of Trinidad's serial conquerors—a saga of slaughter, disease, false glory, and shame—is depicted as vividly as the drama of the mind.

Thus, when he describes how Raleigh and Miranda are unmasked in their conquistadorial deceits, and are in turn deceived as their ambitions unravel, we see that Naipaul is adding a new turn to the bitter farce of failed colonial mimicry that has been a leitmotif throughout his work. For, if the men whom the post-colonials sought to mimic are themselves "mimic men," the only hope for individual authenticity resides in mimicking something that has only been imagined but never realized.

This may seem a more forgiving view of human folly than we have come to expect of Naipaul, but in fact it is also his bleakest. His pretenders' ball of Trinidadian history occurs in a hall of mirrors where there are no heroes. Unless, of course, one counts Naipaul himself, who might be thought to stand alone in his account as the man who has successfully won the post-colonial struggle to become new, to have a new name (he is now a British knight, Sir Vidiadhar) and the Adamic power to be a new name-giver. Yet even now, as he sums up his life's work, he is careful to include himself in the group portrait he is painting:

> Most of us know the parents or grandparents we come from. But we go back and back, forever; we go back all of us to the very beginning; in our blood and bone and brain we carry the memories of thousands of beings. . . . We cannot understand all the traits we have inherited. Sometimes we can be strangers to ourselves.

Naipaul recognizes that he too will become an ancestral figure—that, however potently he renders his account, it is finally only *a* way in the world, not *the* way. Throughout this book, and especially in the first and final chapters, he leaves no room for doubt that what he calls "the mess"—the bloody cycle of racial, caste, and cultural conquest and revenge that has defined the history he writes—is far from spent, and will continue long after he is no longer at hand to sort it out.

But if the struggle cannot be won, the chronicle of the struggle may be victory enough. Naipaul has remarked that his career began with the terror that he might have nothing to say, and that if he did, he might never find the means to say it. By now he has more than laid that anxiety to rest, and is left to wonder whether he will be understood. When he is interviewed he always speaks of the extreme exhaustion that depletes him with the conclusion of a book, and lately he has said that he may not write another. It is possible that he fears becoming like his character, the black revolutionary Lebrun, who "in extreme old age" can remember the story he is expected to tell his interviewers but tends to forget the point.

Naipaul is far from reaching such a pass. Yet even if he writes no more, he has already done the rarest thing: he has described not only the depths of his knowledge but the boundaries of all that he understands to be unknowable. He has written his way in the world indelibly.

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One Down

A Story

Allegra Goodman

ON A background of blue velvet stand two baby pictures in silver frames. Then silver script letters scroll up the screen:

Miriam Elizabeth and Jonathan Daniel
produced by
Edward and Sarah Markowitz
Zaev and Marjorie Schwartz
supported by
Avi, Ben, and Yehudit Markowitz
and Dina Schwartz
and also starring
Ilse Schwartz
Estelle and Sol Kirshenbaum
and
Rose Markowitz
as themselves

This is the opening Miriam and Jon have chosen for their wedding video. Bill, the videographer, has it all mocked up for Ed and Sarah in his studio. When the monitor darkens again, the two of them sit there in silence. Then Sarah says, "That wasn't my daughter, by the way."

"Oh, I know," Bill reassures her. "Those baby pictures are just samples. Miriam and Jon are going to bring in their own."

"Well, they'd better take care of that—" Ed says.

"Not to worry," Bill tells them. "We won't be putting all of this together until after the wedding. You've got plenty of time to think about length, too. I've already gone over this with Miriam and Jon. You have the option in addition to the two-hour version of going for"—Bill reaches behind him and deftly swipes a black binder from his desk—"four hours, or the deluxe, which would be six hours. That would cover the whole wedding."

"Gavel to gavel," Ed says.

"Exactly. From *hors d'oeuvres* through to the getaway car."

"Yeah, I don't think we need that," Ed says.

"It's pricey. But truthfully, for the money, I think your best choice could very well be the four-hour version."

"What's wrong with two hours?" Sarah asks.

"That would come with it, of course. The four hours comes with the two-hour cut. And what's wonderful is you have your options in terms of viewing time. Believe me, I know that right now two hours seems long to you, but when you're looking at a wedding, you're looking at some brutal cuts, and inevitably what happens is a lot of memories end up on the cutting-room floor."

"I'M GOING to sit down and get some reading done," Ed says when they get home to Foggy Bottom. He sits down on the couch where he's been working on the stack of books he has to review. Just a few of the many new books on the prospects for peace in the Middle East. There they lie on the coffee table in their slick dust jackets, gaudy reproaches to Ed, who has not finished his scholarly book on peace and the changing role of terrorism. He opens the morning's *New York Times*.

Sarah puts her purse on the kitchen table and starts making phone calls. "Hello, this is Sarah Markowitz, I want to add to our order—yes, I'll hold."

"Sarah," Ed calls from the living room, "listen to this. 'The Palestinian will hate Israel no matter what Israel does. Give land for peace and you will give up all the security Israel has won in previous wars. A Palestinian state will be a launching pad and a suicide, mandated by America, which I compare to Dr. Kevorkian helping the patient go under to put him out of his misery.' Sarah, are you listening?"

"You know those books aren't very well written," she says.

"No, no, this is a letter in the *Times*. Oh, this is choice: 'The solution to the problem was simple, but it was not followed in the past. Give the Palestinians a one-way ticket out of Israel. Now that time has passed, and the opportunity is gone. The cold war is over, the Soviet Union is gone. Israel ends up paying the peace dividend in the Middle East.'" Ed shakes his head. Then his eye catches the name at the bottom. "Sarah!"

"Yes," Sarah says into the phone. "This is for the Markowitz wedding. We need to add another tux, same style, 44 long, yes, the double-breasted."

"Sarah!"

She stretches the telephone cord so that she

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can stick her head out the kitchen door and glare at Ed. She waves her hand at him. "Could you hold the line a second?" She claps her hand over the mouthpiece of the phone and hisses, "Ed, stop bellowing at me. I am trying to place an order—for your brother—"

"Sarah, look who wrote this thing."

"I don't know, and I don't care."

He thrusts the paper in her face. "Just look at this. What does this say? *Zaev Schwartz*, Scarsdale, New York!"

"I'm very happy for him. Could you add the deposit for that onto our bill? Did I say that the neck is seventeen? Inseam? I don't know the inseam. Damn, I can't find his measurements. Look, I'm going to have to send him in. Would tomorrow be all right? He's flying in from England tonight." She sighs. "Thank you. Goodbye."

"Zaev Schwartz!" Ed exclaims and coughs as if the name were a frog in his throat. "As in—our groom-to-be—his father!"

"It could be a different Schwartz."

"How many Zaev Schwartzes in Scarsdale do you think there are?"

"Could be two or three," Sarah says.

"And spelled that way? I'm telling you, this is the one. Of all the people in the entire country, he's the one who wrote this crap. Can you believe it?"

"You said it was choice."

Ed closes his eyes. "Sarah, this is going to be part of our family! Zaev Schwartz and I are going to be—uh—"

"You're going to be nothing," Sarah says. "You're going to be in-laws."

"Co-grandparents." Ed looks again at the newspaper. He feels depressed. "Doesn't he know my work? Doesn't he have the slightest consideration for my position?"

"How could he know your work?"

"He could read! He could have talked to me about it!"

"You've met the man twice. And, Ed, people don't just pick up scholarly journals and browse through them."

"Scholarly! He could have read me in the *Post*."

"Well, I guess he doesn't get the *Washington Post* in Scarsdale. Look, I've got too much to do right now. I have to call the florist, the band—"

"Sarah, he's a reactionary, a maniac," Ed says helplessly.

"You knew that before," Sarah is brisk. "You've spoken to the man."

"I didn't know he goes around *publishing* this garbage! You know, there are people who make a whole career out of letters to the paper. This is a hobby for people, getting their prejudices published. This is what they do with their time—"

"Well, Ed, they have a right to express their opinions."

"Sure."

"So, enough. You don't have to deal with the man on a professional basis. You're overreacting."

"See, your father and I, for example. We've had our differences," Ed says, "but not *philosophical* differences. Your father and I have always been completely harmonious."

"Right, and you and your brother—"

"Henry and I have always been in complete agreement about the Middle East."

"Do you think we should tell Miriam you're getting cold feet?" Sarah asks Ed as they stand at the gate waiting for their daughter's plane to start unloading.

"I've got cold feet? Am I the one getting married?"

"That was going to be my point," says Sarah. She looks through the plate-glass wall out into the night, where the long covered jetway extends and clamps onto Miriam's plane. When Miriam was little she used to call the process biting the apple. "Let's not mention all this to Miriam, OK?"

"I had no intention of mentioning it." Ed feels put upon. Isn't it his right as a father to mention it? But Sarah insists he take the high moral ground. Then the passengers start trickling out, a few aggressive business types surging forward in the crowd, the servicemen, the kids with backpacks, the families brushing off crumbs, and in the midst of them their daughter, the medical student, sinking under all her bags.

"Ooh, a poodle *kopf*!" Sarah pulls Miriam's hair out of her face. "You need a haircut! We've got the tuxes and the flowers under control, but Uncle Henry needs to go in to try his on. They'll never fit him if he doesn't."

Ed says nothing. A whole conversation is whirling through his head as he imagines Sarah poohpoohing him:

—What does it matter? Why do you have to dramatize this?

—Oh, nothing's the matter, it's just that I have devoted my whole professional life to studying this issue and trying to get people to appreciate its complexity.

—Now, Ed, did he do this just to insult you?

—Look, I don't care why he did it.

"Daddy?" Miriam asks him. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," Ed says, with great precision.

"You look kind of—disgruntled."

"Yeah, well, I guess I'm not feeling very gruntled at the moment."

"We still have to finalize with the band," Sarah tells Miriam in the car on the way home.

"I thought we did that already." Miriam replies from the backseat.

"No, we still have to finalize the songs for the first dance."

"What first dance?" Miriam asks alarmed. "Mommy, we aren't having mixed dancing at the wedding."

"What are we, Puritans?" Ed mutters. Miriam and Jon in their young-blood traditionalism are having an Orthodox wedding with *glatt* kosher

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food, a *very* young and baleful Orthodox rabbi, and separate dancing circles for men and women.

"You mean you and Jon aren't going to have a first dance?" Sarah asks.

"Nope. There is going to be no mixed dancing, remember? We had that big discussion and everything—"

"Well, yeah," Ed says. "But there's gotta be a first dance. First you and Jon dance together and then you dance with me, and Jon dances with his mother—and that's how it's gotta be. Gotta be."

"Daddy, do we have to have another fight about this?" The voice is plaintive from the backseat.

Ed ignores this. "Look, Miriam, I'm not going to say another word about it."

"Good," says Miriam.

"Except for this. I'm paying that band, and when the time comes, they will play the first dance and we will dance it. That's all there is to it. End of discussion. This is a wedding, not a wake."

"Sweetie," Sarah ventures to Miriam as they pull up to the house, "If there isn't any social dancing Grandma and Grandpa won't understand."

Ed tries to put his arm around Miriam as they walk in but she shakes him off and runs in.

"Hey, don't be mean." Ed is hurt. He slides her duffle bag off his shoulder and glides unencumbered into the kitchen. Religion hasn't come to his daughter gracefully; it's made her fierce and punctilious. She has burst out of their household with its pleasant suburban Judaism and become a little refusenik. She refuses to eat in restaurants unless they have rabbinic supervision, refuses to drive anywhere on the Sabbath, refuses to attend services at her family's own synagogue because it has mixed seating and the rabbi uses a microphone. Jonathan is just like her, but more nonchalant. He wears a yarmulke wherever he is. She and Jon have printed up a long explanation of the arcane rituals they have chosen for their nuptials—this to be distributed by the ushers for all relatives and guests who are confused or curious.

The answering machine is blinking. Ed pushes the play button. "Edward? Hello? Am I on the air, as it were? This is your brother, Henry. We just got in. Our room was double-booked, and they've given us the most extraordinary suite. We had hoped to come by tonight, but the thing is, we're completely exhausted—I don't suppose Sarah had the time to see about my morning coat? If she hasn't, please, please tell her not to worry, Susan and I are going to rummage something up by ourselves. Believe me, I have a very good idea the sort of bewildering haze that must be descending. Do you—" The message cuts off with a series of beeps, although Henry seems to have continued talking in happy ignorance.

SARAH wakes early the next morning, and her first thought as she lies in bed is Henry's morning coat. He has to be stopped. All the ushers are wearing tuxedos! She and Ed tried to call the hotel last night, but it seemed that Henry and Susan had disconnected their phone. She left several messages for Henry, and particularly for Susan. If she can only reach Susan, her white-haired English sister-in-law, fearlessly sane. She feels instinctively that Susan will understand. In the meantime, there is the ribeye roast to worry about—and, of course, the kids are coming in, and the Schwartzes. She is having them all for Friday-night dinner. Except for Jonathan and his sister, who won't drive on *Shabbes* from the hotel. She looks over at Ed, deep in sleep, face crushed into his pillow. Then she jumps out of bed.

Several hours later Ed opens his eyes. He has slept long, but he is exhausted. He struggles into his robe and hunts downstairs for the paper. An eerie quiet has descended over the house. Sarah has not left him a note. Now the question is, how to use the time. Which is worse, to give up on the day, or to start something and feel that every minute some new crisis will break? He knows that the phone is going to ring. It will be one of his colleagues calling to tell him he saw the letter by Zaev Schwartz. Who is really going to make that connection? Ed likes to torture himself; he realizes that. But the knowledge does not cheer him up. It only adds an edge of self-loathing to his worrying. Then the phone does ring, and Ed nearly jumps out of his skin.

"Hello, Ed?" It is his mother, Rose, with her Vienna Waltzes CD on in the background. When he visits her his ears ache with the music, and its incessant carousel gaiety.

"Hi, Ma, how are you?"

"Have they arrived?"

"Who? Miriam is here. I guess she went out with Sarah. And Henry and Susan got in last night."

"Oh, I knew that. They called me. I meant the Schwartzes. When are they coming in?"

"Sometime this afternoon, I think."

"And you're going to meet them?"

"No, they're renting a car."

"You're not going to meet them?" She is shocked.

"No, Ma—"

"Why not?"

"Because this is a very complex day!" He feels awkward with this defense, because apparently he has been somewhat left out of the complexity. Somewhere Sarah has left him behind.

"And how is she going to walk all the way through Dulles?" Rose asks, referring to the grandmother, Ilse Schwartz. Rose uses pronouns instead of names and expects everyone to understand her completely. This is not a function of her eighty-three years. She has always done this.

"I'm sure they'll have a wheelchair for her at the airport," Ed says.

"Yes, I've been in those chairs, and I can tell you they don't clean them."

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"Ma, what do you want from me? If I were there, would the chairs be cleaner? They will take care of it, OK? They don't need me there with one more car. And, in fact, I don't think I even *have* a car here."

"They went to the beauty parlor?"

"Look! Sarah didn't leave me a note. She could be at the hotel for all I know."

"Well, it's not very gracious," Rose says.

ED IS just sitting down to eat a sandwich of herring in cream sauce when Sarah bursts into the kitchen with Miriam, who looks much smaller after her haircut. His brother Henry follows, a taller, heavier man than Ed, and Henry's wife Susan brings up the rear, bearing a black garment bag from Mr. Tux. "Oh, Edward!" Henry exclaims and takes his hand. "It is hot, hot, hot out there. Merciless." He mops his forehead with his handkerchief. "And that tuxedo franchise. Good heavens. The boy there pinched me!"

"Inadvertently," Susan says. "Don't exaggerate, darling. Where should I put this?"

"I was standing in front of the mirror—"

"He was checking the fit in the seat of the pants," Sarah explains.

"—his trousers," says Susan.

Henry cuts them off with a wave of his hand. "*Basta!* I don't think we need to recreate the experience here. Suffice it to say, everything was not as it should be." He turns to Ed. "I hope you're wearing your own."

"It was extraordinary," Henry confides once he is seated at the table with his tall glass before him. "The shirt felt exactly like a hotel sheet, the fabric was absolutely impregnated with chemicals. And do you know, the pockets had velcro in them!" He turns around and sees that Miriam has gone upstairs with Sarah. "Far be it from me to question the bride," he whispers to Ed. "But where did she get these ideas about the wedding?"

"It's all part of the Orthodox *shtick*," Ed says gloomily.

"Really! I had no idea this was a religious ritual—tuxedos for 11 A.M. Sunday morning! I could have *brought* my tuxedo. I only suggested renting because Moss Bros. wouldn't let their morning coats out of the country. But tuxedos? Is the dark color significant? Does it have some connection to the frock coat?"

"No, no, that's not a religious ritual, Henry. That's just what people do. I'm talking about—wait a second," Ed interrupts himself and snatches yesterday's *Times* from the recycling bin. "Did you see this?"

Henry puts on his glasses and reads. He sits stock still for a moment and then folds his glasses up again. He gasps. "Edward! Can this be?" Ed feels a sudden affection for his brother, a real warmth. Henry, with all his scholar-in-exile Anglophiliac affectations, can truly respond to the letter, really understand what it means to Ed. "Good God!" Henry cries. "Tell me this isn't the father of the groom."

" 'Fraid so," Ed says with grim satisfaction.

"But it's so—badly written!"

"Not to mention the point of view."

"The point of view, of course. And the way it's expressed. 'A Palestinian state will be a launching pad and a suicide.' This is really—just, too much. You know, it's almost anti-Semitic to print something like this unedited. No, really, Edward. This is an attempt to publicize the Jewish redneck element in the national press."

"But apparently these rednecks exist."

"Not—"

"Not anybody you know? The man is coming down here to become part of our family. And what can you possibly do about it?" Ed demands.

Henry spreads his hands. "What can anyone do? I suppose you'll have to be civil. Where do people learn English like that?"

"Of course I'll be civil." Ed folds the newspaper into quarters. "In fact, I am only mentioning this to you now so we don't have to go through this, you know—"

"Later," Henry says.

"Right. This is going to be Miriam's day, for God's sake, not Zaev Schwartz's."

SARAH opens the door to Miriam's room that evening to tell her to get ready for dinner. Miriam is asleep on the bed. Wedding presents cover the floor and the desk; foam peanuts squeak under Sarah's shoes. There is a Kitchen Aid mixer trailing ribbons, a cut crystal bowl, a sterling candy dish that looks like a large tomato. Then on the desk, the boxes from the shower, nightgowns and salad bowls. And glimmering from its open box in the shadowy light, Henry's shower gift, an enormous topaz ring, perhaps an inch in diameter, smoky gold, almost gauche like a stage ring, almost medieval. "Miriam, you'd better get dressed. They'll be here in fifteen minutes," Sarah says.

Miriam groans. "I'm so tired." She has taken off the past month from her clinical rotations. It's been weeks since she's stayed up all night every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, held cameras for the microsurgeries, checked on the demented patients who throw their feces at the nurses. But she seems to be suffering retroactive sleep deprivation nonetheless. "Where is everybody?" Miriam asks.

"Your sister is setting the table."

"She's here already?"

"Yes, she's here. Your brothers are out getting Grandma."

"Oh, OK."

"So get dressed," Sarah says. "And put on something presentable."

"Like what?"

"I don't know. Like a dress."

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"They're all wrinkled."

"Well, you should have thought of that before." Sarah is losing patience. "You'd better iron something."

"Mommy?" the plaintive voice again.

"What?"

"I don't know. I feel kind of—small."

"Well," Sarah pauses at the door, her mind full of cooking times and the fact that there is a crack in the top of the jellyroll. She hears a sort of snuffle from Miriam. Something between sniffling and sighing.

"I just feel like everyone's ordering everyone else around and, and being really clinical about everything." This is Miriam's nightmare, to find that the ugly light and brisk indignities of the hospital follow you into real life as well. Some medical students find symptoms of every disease they study in themselves, but Miriam sees hospital sterility everywhere she looks, a lack of feeling. She has become more religious in the past two years. What else could she be in those white corridors?

"Miriam, I'm not being clinical, I'm trying to make dinner," Sarah says. "Wear the pink dress. The fuchsia one."

The Markowitzes array themselves in the living room waiting for the Schwartzes. Rose sits in a straightbacked chair; Miriam's brothers sit politely with their feet on the floor but seem too big for the furniture. Susan is upstairs with Sarah ironing Miriam's fuchsia dress, and Ed and Henry pace around together talking about Oxford, almost as if they thought they were being filmed. When the doorbell finally rings and everyone comes in, Miriam is still upstairs, running through the Friday-night service by herself in the dark. Ed holds the door open for Zaev Schwartz. Zaev is a small, somewhat jowly-looking man with dark shadows under his eyes. He seems to be in an expansive mood now, as he gives Ed a white Xerox copy of a newspaper clipping. "Ed, I don't know if you saw my editorial."

"Mm, mm hmm." Ed places the page with saintly delicacy on the coffee table. Zaev looks disappointed.

In the meantime, the groom's grandmother Ilse Schwartz asks, before she and Rose are even introduced, "Zaev, where is the bride?" Ilse is older and smaller than Rose. She lived in Germany and Israel before following her son to the United States, and her accent is German, with Israeli overtones. Rose looks at Ilse's small quick eyes and high cheekbones and thinks that she is an imperious woman. Ilse is just a few years Rose's senior. It is Rose who is the grandmother of the bride. Shouldn't she be treated with a little courtesy?

They all sit in the living room before dinner and try to make conversation. "Ed," Zaev says. He has a deep voice, and his accent is the inverse of his mother's, Israeli with German undertones. He is an engineer, which may or may not account for the fact that as he speaks he seems to be giving instructions. "I have never seen heat like you have here in this city. I said to Marjorie, I cannot imagine living with this every summer. I see you have air-conditioning," Zaev continues. "We are talking about putting it in this summer."

"We have the window units," Zaev's wife Marjorie explains. She is a moon-faced woman, who seems to Sarah almost aggressively gentle and unassuming.

"But we are thinking about installing central air. Do you know something about this?" Zaev asks Ed.

"No," Ed says.

"Putting central air into a house like ours, built when ours was built, is a major project. A major job. The house has to be raised from its foundation to install the vents."

Henry interjects, "But there are those garden units, are there not?"

"The Japanese ones. That is another option. But you know what the problem is with those? There is just one circuit running the whole system. If anything happens to that circuit, OK?, the whole system goes down. And then you've got a major problem."

MIRIAM comes down and Ilse goes to her immediately, gives her a kiss, and ushers her to a seat next to her. "Miriam," she says confidingly in her heavy German accent. "Why have I not heard from you?"

"Heard what?" Miriam asks.

"I have heard nothing from you since you announced your engagement! I've had no letters."

"Oh. I guess I've been so busy I didn't have time," Miriam says.

Ilse shakes her head. "Miriam, do you know that when you marry, you are not just marrying a young man, you are marrying a family."

"It will be interesting to see," Zaev tells Ed and Sarah, "how Miriam and Jon are going to manage when they are homeowners. Jon has never shown any interest in learning about buildings."

"Are you planning to buy them a house?" Susan asks with her very polite, very dry English accent. Sarah cheers her silently.

"No, no, no, I wish I could." Zaev is completely unscathed. "But those guys—" He shakes his head in the direction of the kids.

"Oh, the kids work hard," Sarah says.

"They think they are working hard. Jon doesn't know the meaning of the word work. He has no idea. Do you know what Palestine was when I grew up? It was dust. I had my own business, OK?, raising chickens at thirteen. I was doing yard work after school every day—Jon has only had chores in the house to do; he has always had clothes, books, whatever he wanted. This is all he knows. If anything ever happens in this country, is he going to survive? I hope so. But I don't think so. People laugh when I say this, but my mother," he

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nods in Ilse's direction, "she came from a very wealthy family and they lost everything—they were completely unprepared—"

"But she survived," Sarah says.

"Our grandfather Ludwig had seven children," Ilse is explaining to Miriam. "My father was Walter. There were five children, four daughters, Grete, Annette, Otalie, and I, and one son, Frederick. For my parents, he, Frederick, was the only one. My brother was a great mind, he followed the family footprints. You see, he was a biologist like our grandfather and our father, and our two uncles. You have heard of the Krebs cycle?"

"You were related to Krebs?" Miriam asks.

"My uncle knew him. He prepared work on the Krebs cycle before Hans Krebs came to England. He was a great man."

"No kidding," Miriam says, thinking Ilse is still talking about Krebs.

"And my brother inherited his mind."

Rose is sitting in disbelief. This woman is reciting her entire genealogy without acknowledging anyone else in the room! And it seems an intrusion to Rose, to hear Ilse carry on about her family: her brother, their house in Breslau, Ilse's three sisters, "one to England, one to New York, I to Palestine escaping, and one perishing in Dachau." The story is not so different from that of Rose's family, and that makes Rose feel odd. She can't help feeling that this is her tale to tell, or that at least she should be telling hers first. She has come to believe in the singularity of her own experience as a refugee in England during World War I, and an immigrant in America. In her mind's eye, with her background as a reader of historical romances, she can't help believing that if there is a greater trend or larger story to be told, then it would have to be her story writ large. It isn't polite the way Ilse is talking; it's nearly plagiarism. "Sarah," Rose says.

"Yes, Rose. You know, I think we should all come to the table. Kids, would you help me carry out the food?"

Rose follows Sarah into the kitchen. Sarah is directing her sons, both taller than she is, "Carry that out first. Both hands," and she is trying to cut the meat with her electric knife while fending off Miriam with her pained disapproval at the use of electricity on the Sabbath.

Rose takes her pocketbook, climbs the stairs and hunts around in the small powder-blue bathroom for some hand lotion. She takes the orange bottle of pills out of her purse, swallows one pill and sits down at the edge of the bed in Sarah and Ed's room. She feels a little dizzy. Below she hears the whir of the electric knife, the family moving into the dining room. Something in all this brings back a memory, real or imagined. She is a small foster child in England, lying in bed listening to the clink of a dinner party below. She has been feeling rather neglected lately, during the preparations for this wedding, but she has not said anything. She is also weaker. She is sure of it. The stairs in this house seem taller and harder to climb. The bookcases higher. Perhaps she will sit on this bed all evening and no one will think of looking for her. She will disappear like Alice down the rabbit hole. She will find a small medicine bottle with a label on it: "Drink this."

Miriam comes in. "Grandma, it's time for dinner. Are you OK?"

"I feel weak," Rose says.

Miriam looks at her concerned. Rose remembers with a rush of pleasure that Miriam will be a doctor. "What kind of doctor are you going to be, dear?" she asks as Miriam helps her down the stairs.

"I don't know," Miriam says.

"I think a psychiatrist might be a good profession," Rose tells her. "Is it a psychiatrist or a psychologist? I can never remember. What's the difference between them?"

"Psychiatrists can write prescriptions and psychologists can't."

"Psychiatrist. That's what I said, isn't it?"

"So you read my article?" Zaev asks Ed at the table. He is too proud of it to let it sit there on the coffee table in the other room without comment.

"You mean your letter to the editor," Ed says. He looks at Zaev and tells himself again that now is the time to act with restraint. It's going to be Miriam's day.

"So what did you think?" Zaev asks.

"I thought it was completely off the mark," Ed tells his future co-grandparent. "To be perfectly frank, it was a complete misreading of the political situation—a very promising, hopeful situation."

Zaev stares at Ed. Then he smiles slightly. "A misreading? No, this is not a misreading. I have some experience—"

"So do I," Ed says.

"You are an academic."

"That's right."

"Yes, that's my point," Zaev says. "With all due respect, you have readings and misreadings, but let me tell you, I have some experience with this area—"

In this area, Ed thinks.

"Listen," Zaev begins.

Ed's inner voice replies, —Don't take that patronizing tone with me. Don't start making your global pronouncements about life, the work ethic, and the peace talks to me.

Zaev says, "You have to live in *Eretz Yisrael*—on the land—"

I know what *Eretz Yisrael* means, Ed thinks. You think I don't know a word of Hebrew.

"You have to walk through the hills and valleys. Then you see how small it is and you have a better idea what this land-for-peace means. The country is a splinter, a—what do you call it?"—he turns to his wife.

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"A sliver," Marjorie says.

"Really, sliver? OK, a sliver between the deserts and the enemies. The American government has never been interested in the borders, only in keeping it quiet. This is what I mean when I talk about Kevorkian. This is why I always say that Americans are more interested in painting over the problem than getting to the bottom and solving it. They don't like to get to the root of the matter. This is how they want to get the job done. Do you know, when I wanted to repaint window sills, three painters told me it would be easier to paint over than strip down to the wood? I spoke to Marjorie's sister. She said, look, just get someone to shmear it for you; it will look fine. I said, not a chance. Not a chance. That's not how I do things. This is what I'm talking about when I referred to foreign policy."

"Spare us the metaphors," Ed whispers under his breath.

"What was that?" Zaev asks.

"Nothing," Ed says.

"Sarah," Marjorie says. "This roast is delicious."

"Thank you," Sarah tells her. "Would you like some more?"

"I don't think I could eat any more," Marjorie confesses. She smiles and says, "It's exciting, isn't it? I was talking to a friend of mine in New York whose son got married last summer, and she said something interesting to me. She realized when Ethan got married that it wasn't just a milestone for him—it was a big milestone for *her* as well!"

"Yes, I think that's true," Sarah says. "How about dessert?"

"Can I help you clear?" Marjorie asks.

"No thanks, stay where you are."

"But I'd like to help." Marjorie rises in her seat and is surprised to find that Sarah puts her hand on her shoulder to keep her there.

"Ed, I need you for the tea," Sarah says.

When he gets into the kitchen and the door swings behind him Sarah folds her arms across her chest and glares at him.

"What?" he asks, whispering urgently. "I have been perfectly restrained."

"Go," she says.

"That's it. You brought me in here just so you could glare?" He whispers in her ear. "Can I help it if the man is a silly, self-righteous ass?"

"Shah!"

THE dinner is over. Sarah lies on the couch exhausted. Her muscles ache. "Well, I think that went quite well," Susan says.

"Except for the political interlude," Henry adds.

"Daddy, why did you have to be so grouchy?" Miriam accuses Ed.

"*I* was grouchy?" Ed tries to be good-humored. "I beg your *pedeshka*. Your father-in-law, fine, future father-in-law, was the grouchy one."

"You don't have to have a scene with him every time you see him."

"I didn't have a scene with him."

"Just because you don't like him," Miriam starts.

"It is completely irrelevant whether I like him or not," Ed says. "But I wish you would stop criticizing me."

"I am not criticizing you!" Miriam is getting weepy again. "You've been acting completely weird ever since I got home." She pauses and then says with sudden insight, "And this isn't even about Jon's father. It's about me getting married!"

"*My* getting married," Ed roars.

"That's what I just said."

"You know, Miriam, I've said in the past, someday you and I are going to sit down and get this straightened out and I think today is the day we are going to do it! How old are you, twenty-five? You're going to be married in what, two days? Come over here and I'll tell you about gerunds."

"He doesn't listen to me," Miriam says to her mother. "Didn't he hear what I just said?"

"I have news for you," Sarah tells Miriam. "This is not about your getting married. It really is about Jon's father."

Rose decides to give Ed and Sarah a piece of advice. "I've always followed one rule," she tells them from her chair in the corner. "I've never said anything about my in-laws, and I think this is the best thing to do, to avoid trouble in the family. No matter what you think, you should keep it to yourself."

"Come over here, sweetie," Ed puts his arm around Miriam on the couch. "Gerunds are very simple." Miriam closes her eyes and puts her head on his shoulder. She is exhausted. She is not listening. As far as she can tell he is saying: When you're in reverse, use your common sense and turn the wheel in the direction you want the car to go! "You see? It's dead simple," Ed says.

WELCOME *to our wedding, and thank you for sharing our* simcha, *joy! Our wedding begins with a* kabbalat panim, *literally meeting of faces. Miriam and Jon will hold separate courts, where you can greet them. Miriam will be in the social hall, and Jon will hold his groom's* tisch *or special groom's party in the lounge. There he will give a brief* d'var Torah, *say a few words of Torah learning.*

Susan is reading the wedding program in the social hall where Miriam is sitting in her gown, guests milling around her. "Mm," Susan says. She is wearing a floral dress and a broad-brimmed hat, which she feels does not sit quite right on her head. She has a large head.

"They're marvelous, aren't they?" Henry is standing next to her, stout in his tuxedo, savoring his teriyaki and pineapple on a stick. "I'll have to go get some more."

"No, Henry," Susan says. "It's time for the ceremonial veiling of the bride."

"Veiling? What veiling?"

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"You aren't reading the program," Susan reproves him.

Henry peers over at hers. "We haven't been to the groom's court."

"No, I don't think there's time," Susan protests, but Henry guides her into the lounge.

The little room is full of dark-suited men crowding around a long table where Jonathan stands, tall and slim, giving a learned talk from notes and a stack of open volumes of the Talmud. "Good heavens," Henry whispers in Susan's ear.

"I'll meet you outside," she says.

"Wait, why are you leaving?" he clutches her arm.

"Henry," she whispers, "there aren't any women here."

Henry sees that Ed and Zaev are also standing near the door in their tuxedos, each with a white rosebud boutonniere. They are whispering together like ushers at the back of a theater. "Can you hear him?" Zaev asks Ed. "I can't hear one word."

"Can't hear a thing," Ed replies. "And, to be perfectly honest, that doesn't bother me."

"No? I thought you like this kind of thing."

"What are you talking about?"

"I thought Jon caught this Orthodoxy from Miriam."

"From my daughter! Absolutely not."

"Where does it come from then? I send my son to a yeshiva so he'll learn some Hebrew. Now what have I got? A Talmud scholar! Where does it come from? This is what I want to know."

"Well," Ed says. "I'm just going to try enjoy the wedding and not think about it."

Then Zaev claps Ed on the shoulder and tells him, "We think alike!"

The speech has ended and suddenly wild singing begins. The men lock arms and dance around Jonathan. They dance him out the door and nearly flatten Henry against the wall. He escapes clutching his drink and egg rolls. "Henry, over here," Susan calls to him in the social hall. "Hurry or you won't be able to see." They cannot see Jonathan when he emerges from the huddle of men and stands before Miriam. He rocks back on his heels and pulls the net of Miriam's veil over her face. Then the singing starts up, the dancing huddle dances him away again. The photographer wants to take more pictures of the family as they stand around Miriam—her brothers shaven and smoothed down, her sister who is telling Rose she feels like a sachet pillow in all this lace, Ed who looks as though he's straining to remember something. But Sarah won't allow any more pictures because they are running so late.

In the sanctuary a flute plays an Israeli version of a ditty from the Song of Songs and Miriam walks down the aisle with Ed and Sarah on each side. The guests all rise from their seats as she passes. Henry watches his niece in her slow procession, her gown billowing over her parents' knees in the narrow aisle. He can't help it; he begins to cry. Susan opens her purse and gives him some tissues. "They're crushed, but they're quite clean," she whispers to him. Henry dabs his tears. "She's lovely, isn't she?" says Susan.

"No, it's not that," Henry says. "It's just that I was thinking about our wedding."

"Ours was rather different," Susan says.

"But it reminded me, just the same," Henry tells her.

Rose cannot hear a word, even though she is sitting in the front row. Her hearing aid is acting up, and she can't seem to adjust it properly. The ceremony, the celebration, it is all happening in registers too high or too low. The rabbi is murmuring his speech into the microphone and not enunciating at all. She isn't sure about this man. He couldn't be more than thirty years old, and to her that is not a rabbi. Rose saw earlier that he wasn't even wearing a wedding ring; he does not seem to be established in life, but just looks rather wistful. Perhaps he had a young lady friend who listened to his proposal and then declined! But that is neither here nor there. A proper rabbi wouldn't have such doleful eyes. Miriam, however, is every inch the bride. The dress is not what Rose would have chosen, but it suits her. Rose likes a simpler style. Not so much with the bows and ruffles. And she would have had a proper wedding march. Not Wagner, of course, but at least Mendelssohn.

The rabbi hands Jonathan the lightbulb wrapped in a cloth napkin, and Jon stamps it to pieces under his new black Florsheim dress shoe. Rose's hearing aid shrieks as the band sings out its *klezmer* recessional. The family and the bride and groom are streaming back down the aisle, all the tension of the morning slipping from them.

It is a mitzvah, *good deed, at a wedding to entertain the bride and groom, so as you dance and sing, feel free to let loose and do whatever!*

At the head table, Ed has finished his chicken breast stuffed with wild rice pilaf. He stands up and surveys the seventeen round tables in the social hall, each covered with a peach tablecloth. He feels proud, tired, responsible. He is responsible for this peach domain. Sarah stands next to him and dings her glass with her spoon and the hall quiets. "As many of you know," Ed says, reading from his written text, "Sarah and I are Miriam's parents. We would like to say a few words about this young couple we are here to celebrate with. They are gifted with many things: intelligence, energy, determination, youth."

"And they have given us much as well," Sarah adds from her part of the speech. "They have given us joy, and laughter. And, of course, they have given us Zaev and Marjorie. We look forward to sharing many happy occasions with you in the future."

Ed takes the microphone. "Jon and Miriam are

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deeply committed to the sciences, to Judaism, and they have a lot to offer both to each other—and to the world. This is a time of hope in more ways than one. It is a new beginning for Miriam and Jon, and for the Jewish people as a whole. A time of renewal and peace in Israel. There are always going to be skeptics in this world, pessimists and cynics, but at times like this we have a chance to rejoice and to build lasting relationships. I can only say that we wish you the best in love and in life. *L'chaim.*"

"You changed the speech," Sarah tells him when they sit down. "That wasn't in there."

"Yes it was," Ed says.

"In the old version! I specifically edited out that part."

"I know, Sarah, but the new version didn't say what I wanted to say!" He leans back in his chair happily. He doesn't even notice that Zaev has taken the microphone until Zaev starts talking.

"My name is Zaev Schwartz. Marjorie and I would like to thank Ed and Sarah for their hospitality and to say something as well to all of you. First of all, how happy we are that Jonathan found a girl like Miriam to marry. We always wondered what kind of a girl Jonathan would find and now we know. Our son Jonathan is very academic, and when he introduced us to Miriam we could see that she was too. I was sure even then that on this level they would be compatible. As the New Yorkers here know, Jon was always with his head in a book when he was a child—"

"My God," Ed whispers to Sarah, "how long is he going to talk?"

"He would walk everywhere while he was reading and never look where he was going. Miriam, however, I have observed is of a much more practical bent and she always keeps her eyes open. What we *hope* is that in the future she will keep Jonathan from bumping into the obstacles of life. Because one thing that we all know is that there is no such thing as a perfect world. The best intentions"—he asks Marjorie for a word off-mike—"don't always work out. And the academic theories *most* of the time when they go for a test run take a nose dive. We wish you much health and happiness," Zaev concludes. "*L'chaim.*"

Ed has mixed feelings as he leads Miriam to the dance floor. Annoyance at Zaev's rebuttal to his toast, but also a sense of relief. So the man got up, acted like a complete jerk. He didn't come off well; he really wasn't well spoken. Ed took it all with complete equilibrium. This was a wedding reception, after all, not a debate. He and Miriam dance to "You Are the Sunshine of My Life." The videographer trails them with his extension cords. "How're you doing?" Ed asks Miriam.

"I can't believe it's going so fast," she says.

"What?"

"The time, the day."

It's not going so fast, Ed thinks.

"Is there any coffee?" Rose is asking Sarah at the table.

"Or some tea," Ilse says from her seat on the other side of Rose. "They have tea, do they not?" Ilse asks Rose conspiratorially. Rose looks at Ilse and finds that there is a bond between them.

"It's coming around," Sarah tells them.

"I am very tired," Ilse tells Rose.

"I am exhausted," Rose says.

"How did you like the rabbi's sermon?" Ilse asks Rose.

"I don't like to criticize," Rose says in German.

"I feel this way too," says Ilse. "Better to keep silent." Ilse smiles down at the white orchid at her wrist. Rose tires of making conversation. After all, she and Ilse have little in common.

The circle dancing has begun again, fast and furious. The crowds hoist up the bride and groom in chairs. Miriam almost slides off her chair but catches herself just in time. The videographer and his assistant are standing on aluminum ladders to film aerial views of the crowd. Miriam and Jon ride around on their thrones. It is not like flying, more like riding horseback. On the ground, Marjorie says to Sarah, "You know, when Zaev and I got married I think they forgot to lift us in chairs."

"Really?" Sarah asks.

"I think so. They just forgot about it."

Sarah looks at the sweaty mass of Jon and Miriam's friends, the ring of dark-suited boys around Jon, the lacy circle of girls surrounding Miriam. It is not at all like the wedding she and Ed had. When she and Ed entered the hall together all the guests at the tables stood up and applauded them. Then there was dancing, the fox trot, the cha-cha, the samba. It had been a very elegant wedding.

Ed comes up behind her. "The band wants to know—one more set?"

"OK," Sarah says. Judy and Dan Passachoff come up to tell Sarah they have to slip out early. They have another wedding. "It was beautiful," Judy kisses Sarah.

"One down, three to go," Dan says, glancing over at Ben, Avi, and Yehudit who stand near the band mugging for the cameras.

"It's a real milestone for you," Judy tells Sarah.

"And for Jon and Miriam, too," Sarah says.

After Judy and Dan slip out, Sarah looks at the dancers rushing by hand in hand, some more, some less graceful. She catches sight of Jon and Miriam in the middle, their flushed faces, Miriam's pinned-up bustle trailing a little. What are they thinking at the center of those concentric circles? There is no way to know. They didn't hear a thing their fathers said. They are surrounded by their relatives, yet they are completely oblivious. Yes, she thinks, this is love. The rest will be on video.

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Is Nationalism the Wave of the Future?

Patrick Glynn

WE MIGHT as well be honest at the outset: foreign-policy problems have a kind of intractable and uninteresting quality about them today, sharply contrasting with the nature of foreign-policy debate during the cold-war era. Gone are the days when we could endlessly contend over "the fate of the earth," arguing passionately about abstruse questions of nuclear theology and balancing monumental questions of right and wrong, human survival and annihilation.

Today we worry about a series of difficult and ugly conflicts where—with a few notable exceptions—not very much is at stake in a global sense and not much can be done to solve the problem. Nothing is going to happen in Bosnia, Haiti, or Rwanda—as humanly painful as events may be there—to harm the vital interests of the United States (though Haitian instabilities may bring more refugees to our shores). Even crises that could genuinely upset the global order or involve us in a war—say, a potential conflagration between Russia and Ukraine in the first instance, or an escalation of the challenge from nuclear-ambitious North Korea in the second—do not yield to clear-cut answers.

The Soviet Union may have posed a bigger problem than we face at present, but, as has occasionally been observed, it was an easier and more engaging one from an intellectual point of view. Nuclear deterrence during the cold war had about it a kind of rationality and comforting sophistication. One felt, perhaps not always accurately, that one was dealing with a rational, intelligent, serious, and self-interested opponent, who would respond fairly predictably to certain clearly defined gestures or acts (even though we may have disagreed sharply among ourselves in prescribing policies and predicting responses). Today, whether one is talking about Bosnia or North Korea, we seem to be dealing with a bunch of bloodthirsty lunatics, irrational actors who would not understand their real self-interest even if one painted pictures for them. International conflict today provides a kind of living gloss on Hannah Arendt's famous observation about the "banality" of evil.

Still, there remains a desire, and perhaps a need, to make sense of the world beyond our shores and to find general concepts and policy guidelines—reminiscent of "Communism" and "containment"—that will help us to respond practically to the range of challenges posed by post-cold-war conflicts. Perhaps the clearest candidate for a general label to describe the new kinds of problems we face in the international sphere is "nationalism"—a catchall term to describe the various manifestations of national, ethnic, religious, and tribal conflict and violence we see surfacing in so many corners of the globe. In recent books, Michael Ignatieff and William Pfaff have tried to make the subject of contemporary "nationalism" interesting—no mean task. Gidon Gottlieb has gone them one further—daringly proposing concrete policy suggestions for dealing with the problem. While none of the books quite succeeds in achieving its ambitions, all offer insights into the messy nature of the conflicts we now see roiling in the international realm.*

THE best of the three books—if only because it offers the most in the way of actual reportage—is Ignatieff's *Blood and Belonging*. Written as a companion volume for a BBC series of the same title recently shown on American public television, it recounts Ignatieff's firsthand impressions of nationalist conflicts and movements in ex-Yugoslavia, Germany, Ukraine, Quebec, Kurdistan, and Northern Ireland. It reads as a kind of analytical travelogue, interweaving conversation and description with astute observations about both particular situations and the larger picture.

Ignatieff is a candid and fair reporter, and I am delighted to say that his impressions of the two situations I have seen firsthand—ex-Yugoslavia and Ukraine—pretty much accord with my own. He is a subtle writer and a good stylist, and for those who have a professional or personal interest in these matters, this is a book worth looking at—I would recommend especially the chapters on Quebec and Northern Ireland—even if the narrative can seem tedious at times, mostly, I suppose, because the subject itself—the "nationalists"—can by nature be a bit tedious.

And that, in a sense, is the paradox, the mystery, of the post-cold-war, post-modern era: the side-by-side existence of a new level of cosmopolitanism and enlightenment, on the one hand, with the most primitive, atavistic, and stupid kinds of ethnic separatist feeling, on the other. As Ignatieff rightly points out, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, most of us ex-

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* Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys Into the New Nationalism*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 263 pp., $21.00; William Pfaff, *The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Future of Nationalism*, Simon & Schuster, 256 pp., $22.00; Gidon Gottlieb, *Nation Against State: A New Approach to Ethnic Conflicts and the Decline of Sovereignty*, Council on Foreign Relations Press, 148 pp., $22.95.

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pected, if not precisely "the end of history," then at least a steady march of democratic institutions and cosmopolitan sentiments across the globe. And in reality, some of this occurred: witness, for example, the dramatic and daring internationalization of West European life embodied in the Maastricht treaty. Yet at the same time, we find ourselves today confronted with a curious assortment of fanatical Serbs and Croats, East and West European skinheads, and strange secessionist movements threatening, it sometimes seems, to transform the entire map of the globe into a crazy-quilt of weird separatist ministates.

Especially for those of us imbued with the inherently urbane sensibility of the modern democratic citizen, these fanatical nationalists and their violent propensities are not so easy to understand. Ignatieff stresses the cosmopolitan dimension of his own background and outlook. "Anyone," he writes, "whose father was born in Russia, whose mother was born in England, whose education was in America, and whose working life has been spent in Canada, Great Britain, and France, cannot be expected to be much of an ethnic nationalist." It is interesting to follow Ignatieff's attempts to grasp, from his avowedly "cosmopolitan" perspective, the essentials of the ethnic fanatic's more elemental outlook.

One key to the new ethnic violence, he points out—not so different, we might add, from the pervasive violence of our own urban neighborhoods—is the unruliness of young men freed from all civilized restraint. Ignatieff introduces us to the "new nationalism" by describing a close-run encounter with Serbian "irregulars," a group of rude, bullying, drunk, gun-wielding, murderous, and plainly stupid young males. Everywhere throughout the world of ethnic and communal struggle, as he writes, one finds the pervasive figure of the "warlord" and his followers, young armed men, usually not terribly sophisticated or at all disciplined, men who have become, in the Hobbesian conditions of civil war, a law unto themselves.

Which brings us to a second key element of ethnic violence: weakened states. The "cosmopolitan" viewpoint, Ignatieff notes, actually depends paradoxically on the existence of a strong state which affords enough security to the individual so that he is free to feel tolerant toward his neighbor. When the state breaks down, anything goes. This was part of the problem, as he rightly points out, in disintegrating Yugoslavia. "Never say ethnic cleansing is just racial hatred run wild, just Balkan madness," he writes, and he continues:

> For there is a deep logic to it. By 1990, this part of Yugoslavia [he is apparently speaking of the so-called "Krajina" area] was a Hobbesian world. No one in these villages could be sure who would protect them. If they were Serbs and someone attacked them and they went to the Croatian police, would the Croats protect them? If they were Croats, in a Serbian village, could they be protected against a nighttime attack from a Serbian paramilitary team, usually led by former policemen?

Incidentally, Ignatieff manages to provide an evenhanded account of the Serb-Croat dispute without descending into moral equivalence: he clearly recognizes the greater fanaticism of the Serbs.

It is in the atmosphere of the weakened state, Ignatieff explains, that "belonging" and "blood" become more, even, than a primal source of identity—they become the basis of security itself. "Without a nation's protection," he notes, "everything that an individual values can be rendered worthless. Belonging, on this account, is first and foremost protection from violence." One links up with the clan militia as a simple matter of survival.

But, of course, the most basic attraction of nationalism would seem to be the "sentimental" feeling of belonging at its core. "The nationalist claim," writes Ignatieff, "is that full belonging, the warm sensation that people understand not merely what you say but what you mean, can come only when you are among your own people in your native land." In some cases (e.g., the Serbs), Ignatieff finds this distasteful. In others (e.g., Kurdistan), his sympathies tend to lie with the dispossessed population.

THE main question for us, however, is how widespread and important this phenomenon ultimately is. Is fanatical nationalism the wave of the future, the new international reality, "the key narrative of the new world order," as Ignatieff so often suggests? Or is it rather a temporary atavism, a symptom of a specific transitional era, a problem that will inevitably dissipate as modernization continues in ex-Communist states, as well as in the third world?

I have some sympathy for Ignatieff's desire to stress the overriding danger of nationalism. Indeed, I myself offered similar warnings about the dangers of nationalism and ethnic fragmentation in these pages a year ago ("The Age of Balkanization," July 1993). But on reflection, I am more and more persuaded that Yugoslavia and other such situations constitute not so much a foreshadowing of the future as an unpleasant echo of the ugly past.

Interestingly, Ignatieff, despite his fears of nationalism, offers a good deal of evidence to support this alternative interpretation. Toward the end of the book, for example, referring to the fanatics in Northern Ireland, he quotes the Marxist philosopher Theodor Adorno: "Nationalism no longer quite believes itself." He goes on to note the "bewildering insincerity and inauthenticity" that he found in nationalist rhetoric "everywhere I went." It was, he says, "as if the people who mouthed nationalist slogans were aware, somewhere inside, of the implausibility of their own words." "Nationalism," he continues, "is a form of speech which shouts, not merely so that it will be heard, but so that it will believe itself."

I think this is the case. Serb nationalists, Irish Catholic and Protestant paramilitaries, and others like them are occupying a fantasy realm—living out a kind of protracted and collective psychodrama—that can survive only so long. Interestingly, even in North-

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ern Ireland things are looking better in 1994 than in 1993, when Ignatieff appears to have completed the research for this book.

Increasingly, it seems to me, the crazy nationalists find themselves bucking a global trend—whether as manifested in European integration, the South African elections, or in the Middle East. None of these latter processes of integration and reconciliation can be expected to be entirely smooth. But in the modern global environment, the benefits of peace are so overwhelming when contrasted to the costs of conflict and war—look at the state of Serbia's economy today—and the outside pressures for reconciliation so powerful, that it seems merely a matter of time before recalcitrant groups and nations yield to these forces and make their reconciliation with the larger global trend.

I realize, of course, that such sanguine predictions have been made before—most notably in Norman Angell's famous book, *The Great Illusion*, at the beginning of this century—only to be spectacularly refuted by events. But this time wealth and power are so overwhelmingly concentrated in the hands of governments committed to democracy and tolerance—and the global information culture provides such strong economic and emotional encouragement to integration—that it would seem the democratic impulse has achieved critical mass. In other words, after resisting the idea for some years, I believe Francis Fukuyama and others like him are right. We are indeed living through the "end of history." It is just that the process may take some time.

IF YOU want to hear the other side of the argument, you need look no further than William Pfaff's *The Wrath of Nations*. Pfaff's book is at once an analysis of the new nationalism and an argument for historical pessimism. Indeed, one almost senses that Pfaff's interest in the many problems posed by nationalism derives from his *a-priori* commitment to historical pessimism. But that is perhaps being unfair.

Pfaff's is a different kind of book from Ignatieff's—no reportage, just erudition. It is the product of a learned man, sitting in his study, paging through the history books (when he does not simply remember the historical examples), building a powerful case that if you wish to understand the future, it is necessary to know the past.

He makes some valuable points. For example, he stresses the degree to which nationalism caused the collapse of Communism, which is at least partly true. But the remarkable thing about the "final revolution" in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was its comparative peacefulness, which Pfaff notices but fails really to explain. What Eastern Europe's "Velvet Revolution" showed was that it was possible to integrate powerful nationalist feeling with a liberal democratic outlook and nonviolent methods of conflict resolution, which is precisely the key to what we might call the modern (or post-modern?) way of doing things.

Indeed, one is tempted to ask whether "nationalism" is the best word for the phenomenon at issue—especially when Pfaff tries to force an academically precise definition on the term. Like the textbooks, he points out that "nationalism" proper was a 19th-century invention (originating in the Germanic reaction to Napoleon's universalistic imperialism). Thus he concedes that the two great "internationalist" movements of our century—Communism and Nazism—perpetrated crimes "much worse" than those committed by nationalism *per se*. But when he turns to describe American "nationalism"—which is admittedly quite a strong force, especially for a "nation" with no basis of ethnic unity—one wonders whether the analysis is not being artificially driven by the semantics. That is, does not the "nationalism" of Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic have a good deal more in common with the so-called "internationalism" of a Stalin or a Hitler than with the "nationalism" of American crowds waving the star-spangled banner at the Olympic games?

The problem we are concerned with here is not textbook "nationalism" in all its myriad (and many benign) manifestations. The problem is, rather, the kind of irrational group-identity combined with group-hatred—call it "tribalism"—that results in arson, beatings, or all-out ethnic civil war. In a 1945 essay, George Orwell defined nationalism as, first, "the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocs of millions or tens of millions of people can confidently be labeled 'good' or 'bad,'" and, second, "the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interest." Orwell's definition of nationalism—which included such movements as Communism, Nazism, and even political Catholicism—seems more adequate.

In his time, Orwell believed that nationalism represented "a habit of mind which is now so widespread that it affects our thinking on every subject." That hardly seems to be true today, which is why one is inclined to believe that there has indeed been progress and to reject Pfaff's doctrine of "tragic pessimism." Whether, as Pfaff asserts, "the balance of good and evil in the world—of high-mindedness and low-mindedness—is today much what it was in Neolithic times," we cannot know. But things do look quite a bit better than they did in 1945, which is saying something.

We need to keep problems such as Yugoslavia in perspective—and I say this as one who has devoted a lot of time to advocating some kind of action in Yugoslavia. The war in ex-Yugoslavia is horrible, but it is not quite, as Pfaff suggests, "a contradiction of Europe's progress and new order." Despite the refugee flows, it has not really affected life very much in the rest of Europe. Nor is the present squabbling between the French and the Germans over such things as their shared TV station—will the arguing ever stop?—in any way comparable to the mutual grievances that drove Europe into war after war in which millions, cumulatively, perished.

THIS is not to say that the answers to the Yugoslavias, or for that matter the Kurdistans, are easy in any

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practical sense. Gidon Gottlieb makes a valiant attempt in *Nation Against State* to outline policies that might be applied to these messy conflicts. His major proposal is for new institutional mechanisms or, as he puts it, "additional concepts and a new vocabulary," to give international legal status to "nations," or ethnic and religious groupings, alongside states.

While I agree with Gottlieb's general call for "new thinking" on these matters, it is not clear to me how, or how well, such jerry-rigged institutional arrangements would work. One is reminded of Ignatieff's point that the key to cosmopolitan tolerance lies in a strong, legitimate state structure. Will not competing "national" structures tend to undermine this legitimacy? On the other hand, anything that has promise may be worth trying if it has a chance of stopping war and prodding people to live with one another in peace.

Gottlieb, indeed, offers a range of suggestions, few of which seem likely to be followed. Most depend on far more activism than is likely to be mustered by what is commonly called the "international community." Yugoslavia has shown clearly enough that there are severe limits to what the outside world—including the United States—is willing to do to bring peace to regions where no great power's vital interest is at stake.

Does this amount to moral complacency? Perhaps. But the fact is that for the citizens of developed liberal democracies such wars—perhaps war itself—have become uninteresting, not to say abhorrent. The causes that motivate the Serbs—and, more recently, the Croats and the Muslims—to engage in "ethnic cleansing" seem alien to the modern democratic sensibility. And yet the consequences of violence in places like ex-Yugoslavia are so obviously counterproductive in an economic and in every other sense that, with time, the uselessness of this internecine conflict must become evident even to the parties themselves. Eventually, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims will have to live together again. The outside world will prod, but it will not solve their problem.

We live in an age, in a sense, when the only wars that remain to be fought are senseless wars. The time is long since past when one gained anything economically by capturing territory (with the possible single exception of oil fields) or certainly by enslaving another people. At one time, conquerors like Napoleon were lionized. No more. The kind of passions which motivate violent Serbs and Croats are reviled in the developed world. Today a state can gain far more by lowering its tariff barriers and improving its telecommunications than many previous states have obtained through conquest.

By now, the most powerful and advanced countries—even, by and large, the Russians and the Chinese—understand or are coming to understand this. It is merely a matter of time before the rest of the world gets the news. Foreign policy, the study of the great jostlings of the great powers, the conflicts of nations and states, is becoming more and more uninteresting. And that, gentle reader, is progress.

No, Italy Is Not Going Fascist

Angelo M. Codevilla

On March 27-28, 1994, Italians went to the polls. When the ballots were counted, all the parties that had formed all the governments since World War II had disappeared. Fully four-fifths of the new members of the Italian parliament were themselves brand-new; most were also to the Right of Center.

Clearly, this was some kind of revolution. But what kind? The world's prestige media carried a single answer: fascist. The burden of the charge rested on the 13.5 percent of the vote that had gone to the National Alliance (AN), one of three roughly equal parts of the rightist coalition that swept the elections. AN, which gained five cabinet posts (out of 25), contains a core of people who think well of Benito Mussolini, including the dictator's own granddaughter, who ran from Naples.

The alarms about Italy spread far and wide. In the United States, in op-ed pieces and in news stories with headlines like "The Ghost of Mussolini Keeps Rattling Its Chains," the *New York Times* painted a picture of Italy leading all of

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Europe to a legitimized fascism. The *Washington Post, Time, Newsweek,* and the *New Yorker* followed suit, with only the *Wall Street Journal* dissenting. In France, *Le Monde* editorialized that Italy had made "Mussolinian fascism" into "an ordinary thing." German television superimposed scenes of Italian politicians on old films of goose-stepping Nazi stormtroopers.

Politicians sang the same tune. On May 5, the European parliament, taking the unprecedented step of warning a member country about its politics, reminded Italy that "Nazism and fascism" are beyond modern Europe's pale. France's former Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, proposed "boycotting" any member of AN that Italy might send to organs of the European Union. France's President Mitterrand, Germany's President Herzog, Greece's Prime Minister Papandreou, all issued denunciations of Italy's voters. In Israel, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin proposed the use of tongs in dealing with a tainted Italian government.

SINCE Italy is the world's fifth-largest economy, and is part of the core of the European Union, its slide into fascism would indeed be a worrisome thing. But that is not happening. What is happening instead was well captured by Massimo D'Alema, the number-two man of Italy's renamed Communist party, who ascribed the Right's victory to a spirit of "privatizing libertarianism" combined with "mass anti-statism."

D'Alema is correct, and this alone suggests that the Italian revolution has nothing to do with fascism. For if fascism means anything, it means government ownership and control of business. This was Mussolini's most corrupting legacy, and it is exactly what the new majority is committed to dismantling.

Nor does any Italian politician propose repeating Mussolini's policies in other spheres. Worries about World War II revisionism and a revival of anti-Semitism are particularly misplaced. No country has fewer redeeming memories of the war than Italy; even those who have kind words for Mussolini typically offer the caveat, "except, of course, for the war."

As for anti-Semitism, few places have seen less of it than postwar Italy. Nowadays it is found mainly among the leftist university students who wear fashionable Palestinian headscarves. The longstanding bias of left-leaning Italian governments toward the likes of Arafat and Qaddafi has given way, under the new rightist government, to a tilt toward Israel. Rome's Jewish precincts voted for the Right in 1993 and 1994.

BUT it is, again, especially in the area of the economy that the new government is bent on disengaging the country from Mussolini's legacy—a legacy preserved, nurtured, and perfected by the postwar Italian regime. Indeed, it is impossible to overstate the debt which that regime, although it traveled under the banner of *anti*-fascism, owed, precisely, to fascism. Most of the features of modern Italy's welfare state were invented by none other than Mussolini himself, and the state's instruments for control of the economy, and some of the social-welfare agencies, still bear the names he gave them.

Mussolini also pioneered the underlying political structure of modern Italian government: by taxing and spending a large part of the national income, by influencing the fortunes of the most influential people in society, the fascist party spread its patronage network and engineered popular support for its programs.

This structure survived World War II. For, at the end of the war, the Allies did not destroy Italy's fascist state as they did Germany's. Rather, they turned it over to a consortium of six parties, divided by ideology but united by the desire to take up the fascist party's powers over society and the economy. These parties then adopted the electoral system of proportional representation to shut out competition.

Over the ensuing decades, the new regime—whether nominally run by Christian Democrats or Socialists—succeeded in doing what it set out to do, and thus sowed the seeds of its own collapse. Conquering more and more of society's jobs, buildings, and privileges, and spreading the resulting wealth among its supporters, it created a situation in which the number of beneficiaries began to approach the number of payers, and the increasing discontent of the payers began to overwhelm the decreasing gratitude of the beneficiaries.

BY 1993, the average Italian citizen was working from January 1 to July 28 to pay the state, and only thereafter for himself. Even the value of the house he lived in was considered part of income for tax purposes. Italy's retirement-income system, driven in part by demographic factors, in part by corruption, and in part by its very nature as a pay-as-you-go scheme, was on the verge of imploding, with payroll deductions headed for 50 percent and pensioners deprived of what they thought they had earned. Citizens had to pay for many of their medicines, and medical care was rationed, yet taxes continued to rise.

The Italian people concluded, sensibly enough, that the very pillars of the welfare state—social security and medical care, and widespread regulation of business—had become, in the words of Edward Luttwak, "bureaucratic parasitism, technological stagnation, and immense thievery."

And so the backlash began: during the past two years, some 3,000 of Italy's highest ranking politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen found themselves indicted for doing things that, until very recently, had been considered perfectly normal. And some members of Italy's ruling class even began to call things by their proper names.

Thus, in 1992 the last of the Socialist Prime Ministers, Giuliano Amato, went so far as to dub the Italian regime a "partyocracy" of Christian Democrats, Communists, and Socialists, and then broke a longstanding taboo by saying that this was nothing but "the continuation of fascism." He was right, although prior to the 1990's anyone speaking this way would automati-

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cally have been branded a fascist himself.

ALL this, however, was too little, too late. Over the years, as the outrages committed against decent, productive citizens by the "partyocracy" continued to mount, an opposition had begun to form. Because the cultural elite in modern Italy had always flaunted its leftist views on everything from family life to economics, the opposition was sure to define itself as rightist. And because the ruling parties controlled so much of society, the opposition had to come from the margins. That meant it had to arise locally, and it differed from place to place.

In the South, from Rome to Naples to Sardinia, the margin of opposition politics was occupied by the Italian Social Movement (MSI), a (truly) neo-fascist party that since the 1950's had been getting between 4 and 8 percent of the vote. There was a certain congruence of world view between the old guard in MSI and many Southern Italians—in particular a tendency to be for strong and decorous government, to be rather patriotic, and to favor paternalism in economic matters. But in time, MSI's very status as an outcast began to draw to it masses of voters who wanted to say no to the regime for other reasons, as well as many who were galled by the "advanced" views of the Italian Left on issues like feminism and homosexuality.

One thing is clear: in the 1990's the new voters who were coming to MSI in droves were not motivated by a rediscovered taste for Mussolini. On the contrary, these voters were themselves pushing the party in new and unaccustomed directions.

MSI's young leader, Gianfranco Fini, had the insight to recruit new candidates to match the new electorate coming his way. Even Mussolini's granddaughter in Naples reshaped herself by campaigning against the connection between government and business. Thus the MSI broadened itself, becoming the National Alliance, and in the process transcending neofascism. By 1993, it was winning just under half the voters in the South's major cities.

Meanwhile, in Northern Italy, a group had formed that was even more extraneous to the establishment and in tune with local sentiment. The upstarts who began the Lombard, Venetian, Piedmontese, and Ligurian leagues—now united as the Northern League—emphasized their extraneousness by speaking local dialects rather than Italian. Like their constituents, they were not hicks but rather middle-class professionals in what may be the most productive and highest-income part of Europe. Their complaint was scrawled on countless walls: "We work, Rome robs."

The first of the League's twin demands was autonomy, especially fiscal autonomy, for the North. The second was to shrink the scope of government by privatizing industries and social services, above all by cutting taxes and firing bureaucrats. The League's appeal seemed to come out of the tradition of hard work, personal responsibility, and personal piety as expressed in Alessandro Manzoni's 19th-century novel *The Betrothed.* Among its winning candidates were people who had urged a tax strike and members of very orthodox (and unfashionable) Catholic organizations.

THE way these disparate protest movements became a national majority further discredits the thesis that their victory had something to do with fascism.

The Northern League had sworn never to work with the National Alliance, because the latter still retained some of Mussolini's statism and aversion to local autonomy—and also, frankly, because Northerners tend to see Southerners as welfare cases. The National Alliance, for its part, had sworn never to work with the Northern League, whose demand for federalism it considered seditious, with whose economic policy it disagreed, and whose attitude toward the South it found insulting.

The industrialist Silvio Berlusconi devised an elegant solution: the Northern League would present candidates only in Northern districts where they were well-placed to win; the AN would present candidates only in its Southern bastions. Everywhere else, both would support candidates of Berlusconi's own upstart organization, Forza Italia. Forza Italia and the League would campaign together in the North, and Forza Italia and AN would campaign together in the South.

Throughout the ensuing election campaign, the Left presented itself as a centrist, experienced, and knowledgeable manager of the social-democratic state, and chastised its opponents as extremists. Candidates of the Left alliance, led by the renamed Communist party, denounced the League's demands for local autonomy as racist and undemocratic, and its demand for local control of local resources as selfish. They called AN's opposition to immigration racist, and AN itself fascist. They ridiculed both groups' moral concerns as evidence that they had succumbed to the sales pitch of a professional salesman (Berlusconi).

The Right, by contrast, presented itself as the defender of the people's pocketbook, and the people's morality, against the government. The Right also made radical proposals—for a single tax rate, individual retirement accounts, vouchers for schools, local and regional autonomy—and promised a clean sweep of the privileged class. Berlusconi wrapped the whole thing in Reaganesque optimism. The Right won big.

ITALY's new government may or may not do what it was elected to do. But what happened in Italy offers perspective on the desire for wholesale political housecleaning that is growing throughout the Western world. From Sweden to San Diego, social democracy has just about run its course. Every Western country is experiencing a drastic drop of popular affection for the political parties that have been alternating in government. The new dividing line seems to be between the well-connected and the rest—often represented by rightist groups, if only because these are so clearly the outs.

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Because the welfare state has become a giant patronage machine, its passing will mean the loss of power, perquisites, and prestige for those who run it, or draw grants and connections from it. Thus, establishment figures worried about popular rejection, and confusing social democracy with democracy, will try to pin on the threatening new phenomenon a label that they hope may delegitimize it. Like fascism.

In Italy, the label does not fit: there the revolution is heading away from rather than toward fascism. Of course, this does not mean that elsewhere the decay of the modern welfare state will look the same. After all, other countries have not been vaccinated by experience as Italy was between 1923 and 1943, and the fact that the charges leveled against the Italian Right are false does not mean that similar charges against other political movements (like the National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France) may not have some truth to them.

What the Italian experience does mean, however, is that the effort to stigmatize opposition to the ideas and policies of the Left as fascist or anti-democratic should be viewed with the utmost skepticism—not just in fascism's birthplace, but everywhere (America most emphatically included).

Movies

The Fuehrer's Filmmaker

Richard Grenier

"I THINK the Germans have been too tough on her," I heard a woman behind me say as we left a remarkable three-hour German documentary film entitled (in English) *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl.* The documentary, conceived and directed by Ray Mueller, is based on the life and work of the greatest woman director in film history—who, unfortunately, was also an ardent supporter of Adolf Hitler. The woman behind me continued: "What about Eisenstein and the other Russians who made all those propaganda films about Communism? Nobody's ever held it against them. Why was Leni Riefenstahl any worse?"

As it happens, the prodigious esteem accorded for decades by American film schools to the works of the great Soviet directors—Eisenstein (*October, The Battleship Potemkin, Ivan the Terrible*); Pudovkin (*The End of Saint Petersburg, Mother, Storm Over Asia*); and Dovzhenko (*Arsenal, Earth*)—has been sinking precipitously. Superbly crafted works which brought the cinema into the realm of high culture, these films nonetheless presented quite fabricated "historical" episodes, were sometimes factually fraudulent from one end to the other, and were not only unashamedly propagandistic but never deviated by one iota from the Communist "party line" of the moment. Film students, of course, admired these Soviet films for their technical brilliance, dramatic angles, lighting, and montage (Eisenstein's word); but to a degree they seem also to have fallen under the spell of their "story." Thanks to the events of the last few years, that spell has now been broken, and so, to some extent, has the cachet once enjoyed by Soviet directors.

It is true, as the woman behind me indicated, that Leni Riefenstahl became a pariah in her own country in the wake of the Hitler catastrophe. But it is also true that she continued to be studied abroad by virtually all of today's great Western directors. Indeed, her works still figure hugely in film history today, particularly *Triumph of the Will*, her celebratory documentary of the Nazi party's 1934 congress in Nuremberg, and *Olympia*, her documentary of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.

LENI Riefenstahl was born in 1902 in Berlin to a well-to-do family in the plumbing business. As a teenager—in the face of her father's strong disapproval—she became interested in dance, and first made her mark in Germany as a star performer in that field. Her dancing,

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not unlike that of Isadora Duncan, must have seemed bold and brave and free to emancipated spirits of the early 1920's, but, as it is captured in *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*, it looks slightly ridiculous today.

Still, it was as a dancer that Riefenstahl caught the eye of Weimar's great theatrical producer-director Max Reinhardt (a Jew), who presented her at his *Deutsches Theater*. The next step was movies, and specifically what Germans at the time called "mountain movies." These silent films were an outgrowth of the Romantics' fascination with nature at its most dangerous—angry seas, shipwrecks, threatening jungles, towering mountains—and with the opportunities thereby provided for heroes to demonstrate various combinations of fearlessness, strength, and beauty against the fierceness of nature.

In 1924 Riefenstahl saw *Mountain of Destiny*, directed by Arnold Fanck, and was deeply stirred. Never the retiring sort, she wrote to Fanck demanding to be the star of his next mountain movie, and so she became. Mueller shows us Riefenstahl doing some difficult and rather dangerous rock climbing. This was before the age of doubles and stuntmen, and the young Riefenstahl could very easily have fallen and broken her neck; but that seemed to be part of the attraction. Already we see taking shape a very specific character type.

Riefenstahl starred in a series of these mountain movies (*The Holy Mountain, S.O.S. Iceberg*), after which she left Fanck to direct as well as star in her own mountain movie, *The Blue Light*, with lots of soft, filtered light for shots of her face. Despite her own assertive personality, Riefenstahl felt that women's faces should be featureless and innocent, lit softly from the front to obscure any irregularities. Men's faces, on the other hand, should have character and strength, and be lit from the side to show their sharp, handsome angles.

The Blue Light was a big hit, and it caught the eye of none other than Adolf Hitler, at the time not yet Chancellor of Germany. Returning to Berlin after a publicity tour for *The Blue Light*, knowing nothing of politics and hardly reading newspapers, Riefenstahl went by chance to a Nazi rally at Berlin's Sports Palace. In her autobiography, published last year to generally positive reviews,* she writes:

> I was too far away to see [Hitler's] face. But after the shouts died down I heard his voice: "Fellow Germans!" That very same instant I had an almost apocalyptic vision that I was never able to forget. It seemed as if the earth's surface were spreading out in front of me, like a hemisphere that suddenly splits apart in the middle, spewing out an enormous jet of water, so powerful that it touched the sky and shook the earth. I felt quite paralyzed. Although there was a great deal in his speech that I didn't understand, I was still fascinated, and I sensed that the audience was in bondage to this man.

It is worth comparing this description of rapture with a passage later in her autobiography in which Riefenstahl—who ran up a rather extensive list of lovers: good-looking tennis players, ski instructors, mountain guides, and aviators—describes meeting Glenn Morris, the American decathlon champion, at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games:

> We looked at one another. We both seemed transfixed. It was an incredible moment and I had never experienced anything like it. I tried to choke back the feelings surging up inside me. From then on I avoided Morris, with whom I exchanged barely a dozen words, and yet this meeting had a profound impact on me. Glenn Morris won the decathlon, achieving a new world record. It was already quite dark when the three Americans stood on the podium and received their medals. The dim light prevented any filming of the ceremony, and when Glenn Morris came down the steps, he headed straight toward me. I held out my hand and congratulated him, but he grabbed me in his arms, tore off my blouse, and kissed my breasts, right in the middle of the stadium in front of 100,000 spectators. I wrenched myself from his grasp and dashed away, but I could not forget the wild look in his eyes.

There are many differences between Riefenstahl's descriptions of her encounters with Hitler and with Morris (with whom she soon had a mad love affair), but a number of similarities as well. In addition to exemplifying her prose style, and casting doubt on her general veracity (can anyone believe Morris ripped off her blouse and kissed her bare breasts in the middle of the Olympic Stadium in 1936?), they give clear evidence of Leni Riefenstahl's extreme susceptibility to hero figures. There seems little doubt that the oceanic, orgasmic feeling she experienced on encountering Hitler and Morris was produced not merely by the individuals themselves but by the wild cheering of the crowds. There is considerable overlapping here with the Nazi "cult of the leader," naturally, but Riefenstahl herself appears to have been not so much a Nazi as a worshipper of mass heroes.

SHORTLY after she attended the rally in Berlin, in any case, Riefenstahl boldly wrote another of her letters—this time to Hitler. It was the beginning of a historic relationship. Hitler, she reports in her autobiography, constantly urged her to have more self-confidence—a quality in which other observers did not find her noticeably lacking. She made a random first stab at filming the Nazi-party congress in Nuremberg in 1933, before Hitler had consolidated his power. Interviewing her in *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*, Ray Mueller refers to the 1933 footage as "her" movie, but Riefenstahl is irate with him: it was *not* her movie, she declares, it was not even a movie, just a few shots.

But by the next year, for *Triumph of the Will*, she was ready. She says now that she had no part in the actual planning of the 1934

* *Leni Riefenstahl: A Memoir*. St. Martin's Press. 669 pp., $35.00.

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party congress, which was all the work of Hitler (a failed architect) and of Albert Speer (a very successful architect and later Hitler's armaments minister). But rarely if ever has a film director had at his disposal such resources, with crews everywhere and cameras zooming up and down on specially built mini-elevators. The sports arena at Nuremberg in which the culminating scenes of *Triumph of the Will* take place is, when all is said and done, simply a modest-sized soccer stadium; how Riefenstahl got her shots of what seem to be measureless Germanic masses and godlike Germanic leaders is a marvel to this day.

Hitler, Riefenstahl says, wanted not a political but an "artistic" film. It is easy to sneer at this, but one has only to compare *Triumph of the Will* with the humdrum footage of giant May Day celebrations in Red Square in Moscow, or of comparable celebrations under Mao Zedong in Tiananmen Square in Beijing (in both of which vastly greater numbers of people took part), to realize just how much artistry Hitler got for his money. And the real artistry was accomplished not by cameras on elevators, but by weeks of work in the cutting room as Riefenstahl chose among the thousands and thousands of feet of film, juxtaposing one shot with another in order to produce the desired dramatic effect.

The 1934 Nazi-party congress in Nuremberg was a quintessential example of what Daniel Boorstin was later to call a "pseudo-event," in that essentially it was held not for the actual participants, few of whom could see more than the tiniest fraction of what was going on, but for the millions of Germans who would later see its apotheosis in *Triumph of the Will*. Yet Leni Riefenstahl maintains to this day that her film was not political.

Her attitude toward Hitler's speeches at the party congress is rather breezy. "What's a speech?" she asks in *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*. "A beginning, an end, and in between two or three stirring sentences." The Hitler shown in her film, she maintains, stands for only two things: work and peace. There is not a word of anti-Semitism in the film. (This is true.) Asked by Mueller if she does not feel she glorified Hitler, misleading the German people as to his true nature, Riefenstahl is defiant. There is a whole list of Nazi evils of which she claims she was ignorant, at least until much later on: *Kristallnacht*, book burnings, the concentration camps, preparations for war, and, of course, the "Final Solution."

Well, then, Mueller asks, given what she discovered later, was not her film too worshipful of Hitler? To which she answers, as if a bit surprised, "But that's all there is [in the film], the Fuehrer and the *Volk*, the *Volk* and the Fuehrer." Later, with a hint of disdain, she adds, "What did you want? A newsreel?" And at another moment of irritation under even closer questioning, she declares, "I wish I never made the damn film! It's caused me so much trouble!"

Which has its irony, of course, since were it not for *Triumph of the Will*, and to a lesser degree *Olympia*, Leni Riefenstahl would now be quite forgotten.

HER *Olympia*, about the 1936 Berlin summer games (won by Germany), is another extraordinary film, by almost universal accord the greatest sports movie ever made. In France, where it has a large following, it is called rather appropriately *Les Dieux du Stade* ("The Gods of the Stadium").

If in *Triumph of the Will* Riefenstahl had thousands of feet of film to edit, in *Olympia* she had mile after mile, and the editing took her two years. Nor was she content merely to place her countless cameras in good but conventional vantage points. After fierce altercations, she got permission—unheard of before or since at the Olympic Games—to dig pits by the pole-vault and long-jump tracks, by the discus pitch, the shot-put, and the hammer throw, so she could shoot her athletes godlike against the sky, sometimes seemingly soaring into the sky.

For the marathon, since she was not allowed to follow the runners with her dolly during the race itself, Riefenstahl shot all the principal contenders in close with a "subjective camera" as they did their training, to capture their bodily effort and the test of endurance and will. She did the same with the swimmers and divers, splicing "intight" workout shots with the actual Olympic finals. For the pole vault, the light was too weak to film, so—in some of the movie's most spectacular shots—she got the athletes to do their vaulting all over again after the games were finished.

In short, there has never been a film about sports that can even compare with *Olympia*, with the possible exception of Kon Ichikawa's documentary of the Tokyo Olympics of 1964, a very considerable work, but one which has had nothing like *Olympia*'s influence.

HAVING done nothing of any importance during World War II itself, Leni Riefenstahl at war's end was finally exonerated at American, British, and French "denazification" hearings as having been only a Nazi sympathizer. Still, in disgrace and almost penniless, she lived for many years with her mother in Munich, in a single room without a kitchen or bathroom. In 1954, France's Jean Cocteau (who shared her love of beautiful men) championed her work at the Cannes Film Festival, and in 1959 she was honored, along with Josef von Sternberg, at the Venice Film Festival; but in Germany, for a full quarter-century after the war, her countrymen almost tried to pretend that there had never been such a person as Leni Riefenstahl.

In the early 1970's she got financing for a number of trips to Africa to take still photographs. She first tried the Nile and Kenya, seeking out the most primitive Kenya tribesmen, the Masai, but did not like their physical appearance. Returning to Africa later, she hit upon the Nuba in the southern Sudan, handsome, muscular people given to painting their faces and bodies. Already almost seventy, alone in a hut, she lived among the Nuba for six months and brought back some extraordinary still pictures which, extremely

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well-received, made the name Riefenstahl almost respectable again in Germany. The autobiography she published last year helped to rehabilitate her further. Today, over ninety, still physically vigorous and assertive, unrepentant ("an anti-Semitic word never crossed my lips"!), she is hard at work in a scuba-diving suit doing underwater photography for a film on marine life.

REVIEWING Leni Riefenstahl's autobiography on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review* last year, the critic John Simon asked if the political self-deceptions of an obsessed aesthete could "wipe out the fact of her greatness as an artist." He concluded that in the pursuit of her obsessions, Leni Riefenstahl "may have compromised her humanity. But her artistic integrity, never."

Simon seems to be implying that we should overlook Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi obsessions because of her genius as a director. Whether or not one is disposed to overlook them, however, there is no question that without her work, an important key to modern political history would be missing.

Yet what, exactly, was the nature of her genius as a director? The thesis has been put forth that with her emphasis on male strength and beauty, she represents something that has been called the "fascist aesthetic." On the face of it, this would make fascists of Michelangelo and the ancient Greeks, to whose art Riefenstahl has always been devoted, not to mention the sculptors of the statuary at Rockefeller Center in New York. Questioned about the "fascist aesthetic" by Mueller, Riefenstahl laughs and calls it preposterous.

Does this mean that, were it not for the stigma of her connection with Hitler and her work as a Nazi celebrant, Leni Riefenstahl would have gone on after 1945 to become one of the great postwar directors: a German John Ford, Orson Welles, David Lean, Ingmar Bergman, Visconti, de Sica, or Fellini? Paradoxical though it may seem, the answer to this question is most probably not.

She is certainly a virtuoso, and something in her temperament enabled her to capture on film a specific political and psychological phenomenon: the total surrender of individual will to "the leader" in the name of a mystic nationalism. Although I expect her forthcoming underwater documentary—of which Mueller shows us some footage—will be quite splendid, when it came to dialogue and more conventional drama, the work of her early years bears the ineradicable mark of the "serving-girls' " fiction of her girlhood. *Tiefland*, a "Spanish" story begun just before the war but finally released in 1954, in which she danced again, was a complete dud and an embarrassment. In the 1950's, Riefenstahl saw project after project fall through, but it is hard to feel that the world thereby suffered a terrible loss.

MUELLER does not let Leni Riefenstahl forget her Nazi past. In his documentary he shows footage of the director being received in Vienna shortly before Hitler's annexation of Austria, with Riefenstahl speaking reverently of "our Fuehrer." And perhaps the most incriminating piece of evidence Mueller both shows and reads to us is an ecstatic letter of congratulations Riefenstahl sent to Hitler in 1940 after Germany's great military victory in the West.

"I sent him that letter because I thought peace had come," Leni Riefenstahl replies earnestly. But her letter is not peace-loving. It is triumphalist.

In his film's very last frames, Mueller asks Riefenstahl whether she does not feel guilty at the role she played in the Nazi regime. To which she answers, apparently sincerely puzzled, "Guilty?" She insists that she was never a member of the Nazi party, that she was never anti-Semitic. She realizes that "what Hitler did to the Jews" is a particularly sensitive point, but claims that in the days when she saw him frequently she repeatedly did her best to talk him out of his anti-Semitism. Hitler, however, firmly refused to discuss "the Jewish problem" with her, cutting her off and telling her rather stiffly that he was not going to have a debate about the Jews with the likes of her. (At the thought of Leni Riefenstahl or anyone else trying to talk Hitler out of his anti-Semitism, one does not know whether to laugh or cry.) In the film's last words, she asks, seemingly troubled, "Why should I feel guilty?"

A thought still vibrant in Leni Riefenstahl's memory is a visit Hitler paid to her shortly after the fall of France, with German armies victorious everywhere. He told her that once the war was over, he planned to retire from politics. What he really wanted to do, he said (to her astonishment), was work with her on motion pictures. "If brilliantly done," he declared, "motion pictures could change the world!"

Scholars have often speculated how different the course of history might have been if an aspiring young Austrian architect named Adolf Hitler had been accepted instead of rejected at the Vienna *Kunstschule*—where his application for admission is still on file with accompanying architectural designs. But the thought of Hitler as a great filmmaker is new.

True, a strain of megalomania runs through the work of a number of modern film directors, so the fact that Hitler was attracted to the profession should not really be surprising. Nor, on reflection, is it surprising that he should have preferred an alternative world which he could fashion to his wishes to the real one, which was sometimes obstinate. The Roman Emperor Nero, on his deathbed, is reported by Suetonius to have said, "The world, in me, is losing a great artist." And so the world, in Adolf Hitler, perhaps lost a great filmmaker. The thought casts light on both Hitler and the cinema.

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"Newsweek" Discovers Virtue

Midge Decter

CONSIDER the travails of the newsweekly. Each Monday, year in and year out, it must appear on the stands trumpeting some event or personality that will stir the juices of the magazine-buying public. It must do so, moreover, under the cloud of the possibility that one or more of its competitors will be featuring exactly the same event or personality. How to ensure a cover that will be both novel and significant? The call on the editors' capacity for inventiveness must at times be positively draining—when, that is, as often happens, it does not fail them altogether.

How delighted, therefore, must the editors of *Newsweek* have been as they put together their issue of June 13, 1994. For novel is hardly the word to describe the article they were able to feature that week. Written by a contributing editor, Howard Fineman, the article was titled "The Virtuecrats," and the cover it inspired was a cartoon drawing of William J. Bennett flanked on either side by Peggy Noonan and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Here was a collocation that by itself would be enough to rouse a certain puzzled anticipation. What, after all, could a leading conservative figure have in common with our liberal First Lady, and what could she have in common with a former speechwriter for Presidents Reagan and Bush?

Newsweek's answer, we soon discover, is that they are all concerned with virtue, and in this they are in tune with a new mood that has been sweeping the country.

As Fineman explains it, Americans of all persuasions now agree that there are universally accepted principles of good character and that society is failing to teach them to the young. Indeed, the fraying, as he puts it, of the country's social fabric, "which was once considered the crotchety preoccupation of the cultural Right, has become a national (even liberal) obsession." In a recent *Newsweek* poll, for example, 76 percent of adults rated crime and drug abuse far ahead of jobs and health care as national concerns, and the fear of chaos has made Americans nostalgic for "a more orderly age."

"*I Remember Mama* is long gone," Fineman observes, "replaced by Madonna music videos. Even religious institutions often seem more concerned with group grievances than individual behavior." Even the notoriously liberationist baby boomers, "facing mortality and the even more frightening prospect of teenage kids, are finding that there is at least one absolute after all: good character."

All this adds up to what Fineman characterizes as a "virtue crusade," which is bringing in its wake a new kind of supra-partisan politics as well as a new class of leaders. These are the Virtuecrats, who from all across the political spectrum have arrived at the common view that the formation of character is an urgent aim of government.

WHO are they, these Virtuecrats?* In order of appearance in Fineman's account they are: Bennett, the former Secretary of Education and drug czar, whose anthology, *The Book of Virtues*, has become a major best-seller; Noonan, who in her new book, *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness*, has announced that the New Frontier for the 90's is an inner one; Senators Pete Domenici and Sam Nunn, who led the Senate in creating a Character Counts caucus, which has in turn sought to have the Senate declare a national Character Counts Week; President Clinton, who spent the recent commencement season reminding graduates of the need for virtuous conduct; Hillary Rodham Clinton, who "hasn't given up her search for a 'politics of meaning' "; Jeb Bush, son of George, running for governor in Florida, who "distributes campaign brochures that note he's been 'happily married' for twenty years"; Colin Powell, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is "presumptively virtuous," since that is how he is regarded by 60 percent of the respondents in the *Newsweek* poll; the Republican strategist, William Kristol, who was chief of staff to "a founding Virtuecrat," Vice President Dan Quayle; Stephen Carter, a professor at the Yale law school and the author of *The Culture of Disbelief*, who endorses the importance of the virtues, but cautions that "defining them will create huge battles"; a group who met in Aspen and produced a declaration listing six "Core Elements of Character" that should be inculcated by, in their words, all "youth-in-fluencing institutions." And, finally, there are the Huffingtons, Michael and Arianna: he a member of Congress who is now the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in California and who wishes to change the tax laws to allow deductions for time spent doing volunteer work, and she a noted author (most recently of *The Fourth Instinct*) whose main role in this piece is to make a reliably photogenic appearance in one of the pictures used to adorn it.

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* This term, as it happens, was originally coined not by *Newsweek* but by Joseph Epstein, who spelled it "virtucrat" and in an an article in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1985 applied it to people who parade their own *political* virtue as a mark of moral superiority.

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This scattered cast of characters, says Fineman, Democrats and Republicans alike, all agree on at least one "program" for teaching character, and that is punishment: punishment in all its forms, from jail time to the loss of government benefits. To be sure, he tells us, punishment also happens to be a useful theme for both parties. It enables Republicans to elevate their rhetoric above both "the old, divisive 'law and order' yawp," on the one hand, and the mere need to save the taxpayer money on the other. For their part, the Democrats, by stressing punishment, are able to demonstrate a belief in what a White House aide, William Galston, calls "tough love" and to answer the accusation that they are "soft on crime"—a reputation which has cost them votes for 25 years.

Beyond this consensus about punishment, however, there are very serious disagreements—about, for instance, the proper limits of the role of government and about the place of religion in public life. Such disagreements, Fineman informs us, have resulted in the emergence of three different kinds of Virtuecrats: "the Scouts, the McGuffeys, and the Preachers."

The Scouts are those, like Noonan and the Huffingtons, who put their faith in volunteerism. The McGuffeys, named for the author of textbooks widely used in the 19th and early 20th centuries, believe that government must be involved in "teaching goodness." In Fineman's taxonomy, the McGuffeys include both the Clintons and Bennett, who are "all for 'character education' in public schools—a trend already exploding across the country." In addition, the President advocates a program of national service and Mrs. Clinton has adopted health care as "her personal 'politics of meaning,'" while Bennett "envisions a system of government-supported orphanages for the underclass."

As for the Preachers, they "insist that character education without the worship of God is worthless. Tuition vouchers and prayer in the schools are their main goals." This last category covers a large field, from Stephen Carter to all three candidates for mayor of Washington, D.C. to a Christian evangelist like Pat Robertson.

The last word in this heady *tour d'horizon* goes to Michael Horowitz of the conservative think tank, the Manhattan Institute. If we are serious about this new swing of the pendulum from self-expression to self-discipline, cautions Horowitz, "we will have to sacrifice some measure of the freedom we now have to do anything we want if it feels good." In other words, Fineman sums up, "it's not the laws we pass but the lives we lead."

Now, there is certainly no question that a shift in public mood is taking place, and that large numbers of Americans are fed up with the consequences of liberal latitudinarianism (whether or not they identify what disturbs them as such). Although the symptoms are everywhere to be seen, the extraordinary, one might once have said unbelievable, success of Bennett's anthology—described by its publisher as "designed to help children understand and develop character, and help adults teach them"—attests all by itself to a great hunger for the reaffirmation and inculcation of the traditional virtues.

Nor is there any question that this spreading mood will have political repercussions. But aside from the building of a lot of new jails, Fineman seems to have had a certain difficulty sorting out what these repercussions might actually be. To begin with, his division of the Virtuecrats into Scouts, McGuffeys, and Preachers is sloppy and misleading, since these categories bear small relation to the public figures used to illustrate them.

Take that well-known McGuffey, Bill Clinton. How exactly has he evinced his wish that virtue be taught in the schools? Has he, for example, come out against programs like the Rainbow Curriculum in New York which instruct children in the techniques of "safe sex," especially as practiced by homosexuals? Has he reproached his Surgeon General for her cheerful complacency about adolescent sexuality (accompanied by government-issued condoms of course)?

Details aside, however, Fineman's account of the "virtue crusade," far from usefully calling attention to and helping to explain an important new phenomenon, is itself a symptom of the very condition about which people have been growing ever more upset. The "national obsession" with the "fraying of the social fabric" to which Fineman alludes is not, as his method of dealing with it would suggest, some new item of fashion being offered this season by a group of journalistic designers. It is, rather, the name for the feeling that one is surrounded by a kind of creeping cultural chaos—a ubiquitous lawlessness—of thought as well as behavior, and that no one in authority seems willing to do anything about it.

Yet no sooner does someone like Bennett come along with a genuine effort to do something about it than *Newsweek* jumps in to lump him together with the Clinton health-care plan—which, whatever its merits, has nothing whatever to do with the case—and then throws additional irrelevancies in for good measure. In this way, *Newsweek* manages to make its own contribution to the cultural chaos which Bennett and other serious thinkers (foremost among them James Q. Wilson in his recent book, *The Moral Sense*) have been trying to counter.

PERHAPS this was done by *Newsweek* out of an honest confusion driven by the compulsive quest for novelty. But Fineman's sneering references to the "crotchety" Right with its "'law and order' yawp" arouse the suspicion that there was method in his incoherence. That is, he may well have been attempting to obscure the fact that it is conservatives who deserve the credit for insisting—usually against the contemptuous resistance of liberals like him—on the moral component of our domestic disorders.

If that was indeed his intention, he has succeeded in carrying it out. But it is unlikely that anyone—except possibly for his fellow liberals—will be fooled into thinking that the Democrats really care as much about the moral issue as the Republicans, or that, where virtue is concerned, Bill Bennett and Bill Clinton are on the same side.

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Against the Tide

A FISH IN THE WATER: A MEMOIR. By MARIO VARGAS LLOSA. TRANSLATED BY HELEN LANE. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 532 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by
ARTURO J. CRUZ, JR.
and CONSUELO CRUZ SEQUEIRA

THROUGHOUT most of Spanish America, from Argentina to Mexico, the people of one country after another proudly and fatalistically lay claim to having the basest politicians, the most egotistical entrepreneurs, and, sooner or later, the harshest military and *guerrilleros*. This pessimistic conceit shapes civic attitudes and even civic conduct. The more Latin Americans believe that their particular sociopolitical system is beyond redemption, the more the *gente decente*—the decent people—come to equate civility with apathy. They may eschew state handouts and bribes, and they may try not to harm others in the course of their business affairs, but they also never take personal risks for something greater than self or family.

This was Peru's condition in the late 1980's, when the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa—internationally famous and at the peak of his creative powers—assumed the leadership of the Freedom Movement, a mass of "decent people" exhausted by the statist demagoguery that had passed for public policy under the presidency of the socialist Alan García. Against the protestations of his wife, Patricia, an implacable voice for common sense (and later for conscience), Vargas Llosa took a risk for community. He became a presidential candidate.

The candidate set out to transform the patronage character of the state, to "moralize" politics, and to make government responsive to the needs of the powerless. He set out, in short, to change Peruvian political culture. To this end, he appealed to a wide range of social groups, from middle-class professionals to peasants to the inhabitants of *pueblos jovenes*—the poor neighborhoods that grow ceaselessly in the periphery of Peru's capital city of Lima and which go by the name, at once paradoxical and thoroughly appropriate, of "young towns."

The mounting of this collective defiance against corrupt power—it ended in electoral defeat—is the theme of Vargas Llosa's memoir, *A Fish in the Water.* But equally central to the book is the story of his own life. Throughout the book, autobiographical chapters, beginning with childhood, alternate with chapters discussing Peruvian politics, the Freedom Movement, and Vargas Llosa's presidential candidacy. Rather than detracting from the narrative's fluidity, this alternating structure, with its shifts in tone and style, adds to the intriguing quality of the book.

The "political" chapters of *A Fish in the Water* read like the diary of an astute social critic who, for reasons he does not fully comprehend, has also become the protagonist of the events he observes.

In this dual role of critic and protagonist, Vargas Llosa tells us about the petty maneuvers and diversionary tactics not only of his adversaries but especially of his allies. (Eventually, Vargas Llosa was disappointed even by some of his closest collaborators, particularly the brilliant but vain Hernando de Soto.) He also describes the excruciating frustration of having to deal with political bosses in Peru's distant regions—characters with pencil-thin mustaches who in flowery speeches pledged unconditional loyalty to Vargas Llosa's movement exactly, and with the same degree of sincerity, as they had done to other political movements in the past. It was these infinitely elastic orators who undermined one of Vargas Llosa's implausible reformist projects: to hold primary elections within his own movement in the midst of a national campaign.

Beyond the immediate machinations of his allies, and beyond the schemes of remote regional bosses, Vargas Llosa also had to contend with the iron circle of the elites. On both the Left and the Right, these elites sought to preserve, and to justify the preservation of, a massive state. Where the Left appealed to the rhetoric of redistribution, the Right appealed to the rhetoric of mercantilism. In criticizing their shared devotion to statism, Vargas Llosa came in for attacks from both sides, with APRA, Peru's traditional leftist-populist party (and the party of Alan García), labeling him a "pornographic slanderer" and an atheist.

Ultimately, Vargas Llosa had to undergo the cruelest revelation of all: namely, that political ideas, no matter how persuasive, are not as important in Peru as the *carnet*—the identification card issued to every party militant. On that ID, the party (literally) stamps its seals: signs of approbation which attest to the bearer's political virtue and entitle him to rewards should the party attain power. Put another way, Vargas Llosa came face to face with an ancient truth, not just about Peru but about Spanish America: ever since the Conquest, political identity has remained a matter of dignified opportunism.

THIS brings us to a puzzle: how could this Peruvian, who knows his country so intimately, have been so clueless as to what it held in store for him? After all, and contrary to the allegations of detractors who saw him as "alien," his life had been intensely Peruvian. Although he spent his earliest years in Bolivia, his childhood innocence and happiness, as well as his entire world view, were a garden lovingly tended by a family, indeed a clan, steeped in Peruvian traditions. More importantly, as he approached adolescence he returned to his native Peru, where his expe-

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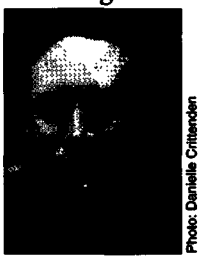

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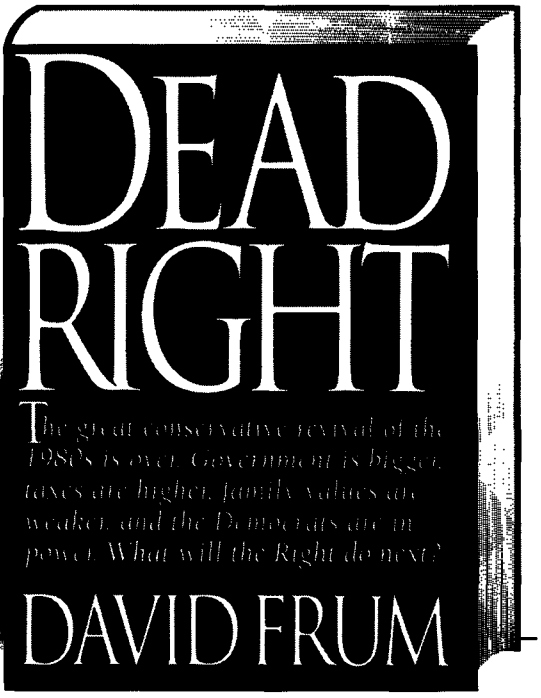
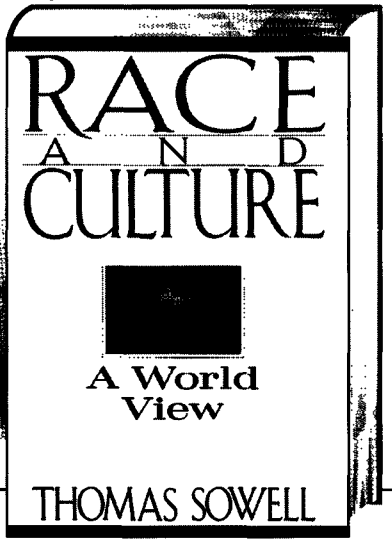

DEAD RIGHT
The great conservative revival of the 1980's is over. Government is bigger, taxes are higher, family values are weaker, and the Democrats are in power. What will the Right do next?
DAVID FRUM

A MAJOR STATEMENT ON RACE, CULTURE, AND THE EXPLOSIVE POLICY ISSUES THAT REVOLVE AROUND THEM

by the noted *Forbes* columnist and author of *Ethnic America*



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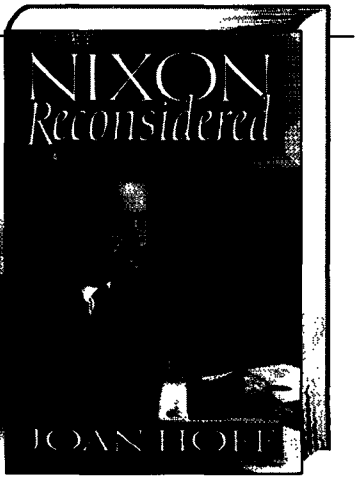

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riences took him into the soul of the nation.

These experiences are related in the autobiographical chapters which unfold like a novel-in-the-making—a novel rife with characters, including the author himself. There, we learn that, on his maternal side, Vargas Llosa belongs to an upper-class Peruvian family. As a very little boy, he is told that his father is dead. But then the elder Vargas Llosa suddenly reappears on the scene. Feeling inferior to his wife—he was not, in fact, her social equal—he lashes out at her; she, cowed by fright and by passionate love for him, endures all. The boy, too, becomes the butt of his father's rage, and soon his prayers for his supposedly dead papa turn to hateful, rancorous fantasies about "that man."

Later, as a cadet at the military academy which his austere father hopes will turn him into a real man, the young Mario lives in a Peru writ small: a callous institution of hazings and drills where he is surrounded by Indians, *mestizos*, blacks, and mulattoes, all filled with resentment toward "whiteys" like himself. At the tender age of sixteen, he becomes a journalist for the newspaper *La Crónica*, and is often assigned to the "red page," covering prostitutes, criminals, transvestites, and corpses.

It is in Peru, and as a Peruvian, that the young Vargas Llosa learns the strictures of courtly love in a traditional society, and the rebelliousness of university life. And it is in Peru and as a Peruvian, too, that he discovers literature and its ghost, politics. Finally, it is as a Peruvian that he moves from the standard leftism of the literary world to a new position—rare among Latin American intellectuals (and indeed intellectuals everywhere)—closely resembling the one known in the U.S. as neoconservatism.

UNDOUBTEDLY, then, Mario Vargas Llosa was a thorough Peruvian when he became a presidential candidate. So why was he as unprepared as any foreigner for what befell him? And—a better question—why did he run in the first place? After all, for an acclaimed novelist who was always in demand in Europe and the United States, the opportunity cost of this mission of redemption was extraordinarily high.

Both questions have the same answer, which can be gleaned from this memoir. Vargas Llosa carried within him the image of his maternal grandfather, a kind and honorable man with whom he had lived until the advent of his resurrected father. It was in the image of this old man that Vargas Llosa saw the good Peru, the Peru that might become a paragon of rectitude. Evidently this dream more than compensated for the costs of political struggle. But it also rendered Vargas Llosa an innocent in his own land.

Reflecting on his defeat to Alberto Fujimori, Vargas Llosa puts much stock in what he sees as a tactical error: the decision to ally his new Freedom Movement with the discredited Popular Action and Christian Popular parties. This assessment is probably accurate, but as an explanation it is also partial. Could it be that those Peruvians were right after all who felt that Vargas Llosa was not a "true" Peruvian—in the sense that, unlike them, he was in the fight only because he chose to be, and always retained the singular power to extricate himself from their web of hopelessness? If so, then Vargas Llosa's gift to them—voluntarily choosing to share in their collective struggle—was also the gesture that wounded him deeply.

Such is Peru. Such are the mysteries that extend well beyond its confines. To learn important lessons about both, one need only read this haunting memoir by the man who was free to stay or to go.

The Road from Rujenoy

SUMMING UP. BY YITZHAK SHAMIR. *Little, Brown. 288 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

TOWARD the close of the 1991 Madrid peace conference, the Syrian Foreign Minister, Farouk al-Sharaa, startled his fellow delegates by supplementing his denunciation of Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, with an illustration. "Let me show you," he said, "an old picture of Shamir when he was thirty-two." He then held up a British police poster from 1940's Palestine, calling for Shamir's arrest.

It was certainly odd of the senior Syrian diplomat, a prominent member of a regime that regards itself as a leader in the anticolonial struggle, to include in his indictment of Shamir a document demonstrating, as it were, the Israeli's anticolonialist *bona fides*. Odd or not, however, it is unquestionably true that in his youth Yitzhak Shamir was a bitter and extreme foe of British imperialism. *Summing Up*, Shamir's autobiography, is the engrossing and ironic story of his long odyssey from the fringe of Jewish political life to its core.

YITZHAK YEZERNITSKY—Shamir was the name on his forged ID when the British arrested him in 1946, and he retained it for "sentimental reasons"—was born in 1915 in the small Polish town of Rujenoy. His parents, ardent Zionists, immersed him in Hebrew, and from early childhood Shamir's life was centered on the land of Israel to which, as a twenty-year-old, he emigrated in 1935. His family remained behind and perished in the Holocaust.

When Shamir arrived in Palestine, Britain was already in headlong retreat from the obligations it had assumed under the League of Nations Mandate to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home. As Hitler began his war against the Jews, the British, fearful of antagonizing the Arabs, began their own campaign to prevent Jewish refugees from reaching Palestine.

In 1940, Shamir's bitterness against this policy led him to abandon the militantly anti-British Irgun for the even more militant Lehi, known to its opponents as the "Stern Gang," a tiny underground group dedicated to fighting the British even as the British were fighting the Nazis. The overwhelming majority of Palestinian

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Jews, believing that the common struggle against Nazism should supersede all else, strongly opposed Lehi, and the Haganah, the mainstream Jewish self-defense force under the control of David Ben-Gurion, joined the British effort to suppress it. But despite the fact that only the British army stood between Palestine and Rommel's Afrika Korps, Shamir (who took the underground alias of Michael, after IRA leader Michael Collins) had "not a shred of doubt," as he writes here, that Great Britain and Nazi Germany were *both* evil empires: "By barring Jews who could still get out of Europe from entering Palestine, and doing so for reasons of expedience, the British were, in fact, sharing in the guilt of the Nazis."

In 1941, after Lehi's charismatic leader, Abraham Stern, was gunned down by the British, the twenty-six-year-old Shamir and two other Lehi members took control of the group. While his confederates focused on ideology and propaganda, Shamir assumed command of the organization's paramilitary activities, a role in which he "made, checked, and approved the detailed plans for Lehi operations."

Shamir's description of life in the underground is extraordinarily vivid, in part because he shuns euphemisms. Writing about Lehi's finances, for example, he explains:

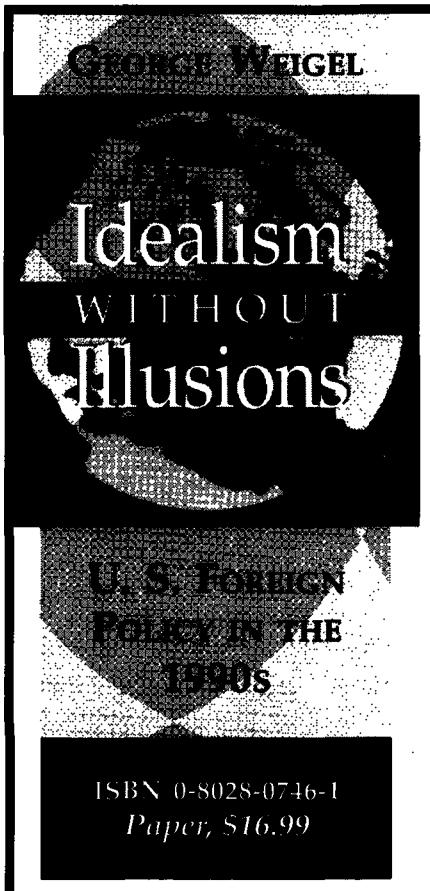
> In view of the circumstances, . . . there seemed no alternative to robbery. My father would have called it expropriation (as in revolutionary Russia); others called it confiscation; but in plain language it was robbery—bank robbery. After all, where else would one go for money?

And explaining his differences with Menachem Begin of the Irgun, Shamir simply notes that Begin failed to approve of, or understand, "Lehi's *modus operandi*." Begin's principal shortcoming: "He opposed all assassination."

Shamir, of course, did not. In 1944, Lehi succeeded in assassinating Britain's resident minister in the Middle East, Lord Moyne, thereby alienating Winston Churchill, Zionism's most powerful ally. Shamir is proud of this and other Lehi actions, and regards Lehi members as heroic freedom fighters.

The Shamir who emerged from the underground after Israel achieved independence was a most unusual figure. Inspired by no economic or social vision and basically uninterested in partisan politics, he had no other ambition than to place his formidable talents at the service of the new state. Yet, given the Labor establishment's intense hostility to Lehi, this was no easy task. At first Shamir undertook a variety of business ventures, "of which the best that can be said," he writes, "is that . . . when they vanished, it was quickly." Only in 1955 did Isser Harel, the head of Israeli intelligence, invite him to join the Mossad, an offer he accepted with alacrity.

Because Shamir may be one of the few Israelis who believe in strictly obeying the law against unauthorized disclosure of Mossad activities, his description of his



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decade's work in that shadowy organization is quite sketchy. There is little doubt, however, that Shamir enjoyed coming in from the cold:

> I felt at home very soon. I knew, of course, that I was surely rubbing shoulders with men who had tried, not so long ago, to hunt me down. . . . But it didn't bother me. I felt that what happened before the state was proclaimed was one thing; everything after was something else. . . .

After leaving the Mossad, and spending a few years in yet another covert crusade—this time on behalf of Soviet Jewry—Shamir joined Begin's Herut party in 1970. In 1973, at the age of fifty-eight, he became a full-time politician, a member of Israel's Knesset. In 1977, after Begin's electoral triumph, Shamir was appointed Speaker of the Knesset, where his most notable actions were his decisions to abstain from endorsing both the 1978 Camp David accords and the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, on the grounds that they set dangerous precedents: dismantling Jewish settlements and withdrawing in the Sinai to the pre-1967 lines.

Needless to say, neither vote endeared him to Begin. Nonetheless, after Moshe Dayan resigned as Foreign Minister in 1980, Begin picked Shamir to succeed him. Shamir would continue to occupy the heights of Israel's political life, either as Foreign Minister or as Prime Minister, for the next twelve years.

IN HIS early years as Foreign Minister, the most important lesson Shamir reports learning was that in the game of nations, Israel really does not bring many chips to the table:

> Nothing I had to sell to would-be customers, to put it bluntly, could compete with the Arabs' wares, which included oil, gold, and UN votes—and when and if these failed to win them friends, there were always the threats, and the realities, of the Arab boycott, of economic blackmail, and of terrorism to fall back on. After all, how can one compare Arab power with the infinitely lesser potential, in all respects, of a small country like Israel whose main resource is the motivation and brightness of its manpower?

Given these harsh realities, Shamir's conclusion was quite reasonable: "Big countries can afford to make mistakes; small ones cannot." As both Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, his efforts were mainly directed not at attaining some positive objective but at preventing Israel from making mistakes—of which the most serious, in his view, would be allowing a Palestinian state to emerge in the West Bank and Gaza. As Shamir saw it, if only Israel held firm, the Arabs would eventually tire of their struggle and settle the conflict.

Shamir's years as Israel's Prime Minister will be remembered primarily for three episodes: the outbreak of the *intifada*, his role during the 1991 Gulf war, and his conflict with President George Bush.

Concerning the *intifada*, Shamir correctly notes that

> one of the main reasons it lasted as long as it did . . . was that the rioters were only too familiar with the restraints we imposed on ourselves . . . and counted with justification on Israel's collective morality and restraint.

What he neglects to say is that in declining to take draconian measures against the Arab population as a whole, measures which might well have crushed the *intifada*, Shamir was essentially adopting the old Haganah doctrine of *havlagah* (self-restraint) which he had so bitterly opposed in the 1930's.

About his decision not to retaliate when Iraqi Scud missiles landed in Israel during the Gulf war, he confesses: "I can think of nothing that went more against my grain." Indeed, some have argued that by not responding, Shamir undermined Israel's deterrent capacity. He himself is unapologetic about his decision, yet it is a curious twist that the firebrand who would not accept a policy of restraint toward Britain in World War II later found himself advocating restraint toward Iraq.

Shamir's conflict with President Bush is also laced with irony—though it is Bush who comes off looking worse. Had Israel not set back Iraq's nuclear-weapons program by years when it destroyed the Osirak reactor with a precision-bombing attack in 1981, Bush's finest hour—his splendid leadership throughout the Gulf crisis—might have ended, literally, in a flash. Yet in 1981, Bush, then serving as Vice President in the Reagan administration, was one of the harshest critics of the Israeli action.

Even after it became clear to all that the raid had been justified, Bush never acknowledged his debt to the Israeli government that ordered it. As President, he pulled all the levers of American diplomacy to unseat the governing Likud party and replace it with the Labor opposition (which had criticized the raid in 1981).

The Israeli electorate granted Bush's wish in 1992. Shamir, however, attributes his defeat in that year's elections not to American meddling but to the wave of Russian immigrants who had recently arrived in Israel. Angered and disoriented by the hardships they encountered in their new home, these new Israelis, he writes, took their frustrations out on his government. If true, this is yet another irony of Shamir's career: undefeated by the Arabs, the British, the Haganah, or George Bush, he was finally brought down by the Jews of the former Soviet Union on whose behalf he had selflessly toiled for years.

How, then, will history regard Yitzhak Shamir? In assessing his behavior during World War II, one is reminded of Paul Johnson's argument that statesmanship is the ability to distinguish among different degrees of evil. By this criterion, the anti-imperialist Shamir of the 1940's was far indeed from statesmanship; in fact, Lehi's actions during the war were the height of folly.

The same cannot be said of Shamir's behavior in office. When he came to power, he largely followed the policies that had been pursued by Israel's Labor party in an earlier era: restraint, settlements, and a hard-nosed realism about Israel's enemies. His position on

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Jewish settlement of the land of Israel, in particular, had been a keystone of the Labor movement and of the Israeli Left since the days of David Ben-Gurion. Yet for practicing the kinds of policies which the Left had once preached but had lately come to abandon and even to repudiate, Shamir will probably never be forgiven by the heirs of Ben-Gurion. That may be the deepest irony of all.

All That Jazz

HOLE IN OUR SOUL: THE LOSS OF BEAUTY AND MEANING IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC. BY MARTHA BAYLES. *Free Press. 453 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL J. SILVER

MARTHA BAYLES, a former television and arts critic for the *Wall Street Journal*, here tells the troubled story of American popular music. Her title comes from a blues lyric which warns that those who do not have a feeling for this art form must have "a hole in the soul." Awkward as a title, the phrase captures neatly this book's essential thesis, which is that the farther American popular music has traveled from the "Afro-American idiom," the more alienated it has become from the celebration of life and of our common humanity which was once at its core. And indeed, that is the dismal fate Bayles sees: the devolution of a once-vibrant tradition into an atomized, decadent expression of nihilism, narcissism, and violence.

In the realm of (mainly white) rock music, the deplorable trend Bayles explores is seen in the dominance of "heavy metal" and the rise of "grunge"—the noise-laden style of groups like Nirvana (whose lead singer, Kurt Cobain, recently committed suicide) and Pearl Jam, whose lyrics express the empty despair and anomie of "rebels without a clue." Within the (mainly black) genre of "rap" music—fast, stylized talking over a heavy beat—the leading style has become "gangsta" rap, which celebrates misogyny, the drug trade, gang violence, black-racist separatism, and hatred of traditional society.

How did we come to this pass? Bayles tells her story in different stages. In one of them, she sketches the familiar history of how the Afro-American idiom evolved, and how it came to interact with music derived from Europe. This cross-fertilization of African and European musical traditions led to the golden age of American song—the creative mix that launched, to name just a few great figures, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Jerome Kern. The white songsmiths of "Tin Pan Alley" found fresh inspiration in Afro-American forms like ragtime, boogie-woogie, and early swing jazz; in turn, black jazz soloists picked up from these wonderful songs new harmonic resources for improvisational playing.

This sort of mutual inspiration has gone on throughout the century—at least until recently. But before dealing with the forces that now threaten to cut contemporary popular music off from its humanizing roots, Bayles interjects a vigorous argument on behalf of the black tradition in particular. By doing so, she hopes to rescue the American black idiom from the condescension of both its enemies and its would-be friends.

Thus, Bayles heaps scorn on the dismissal of jazz by some European lovers of classical music, citing fictional portraits of crazed jazz musicians in Thomas Mann and Herman Hesse, and the excoriations of the social theorist Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School. She chalks up much of this disdain to simple racism or, among the more well-meaning, a misunderstanding of jazz artistry.

With greater originality, she also exposes and mocks the appropriation of black music by a cult of "primitivism" on the cultural Left, exemplified by the rock critic Greil Marcus and the Rolling Stones' lead singer Mick Jagger, who in their different ways reduce the black idiom to a collection of sexual tics. The mirror image of racist contempt, primitivism celebrates the primal "energy" and "rawness" of jazz and the blues, thereby robbing them of their nuance, wit, and intelligence in order to make them symbolic of a (spurious) radical break with Western culture. These, Bayles writes, are among the ugliest of stereotypes, because their true patronizing nature is hidden by a false face of sympathetic understanding.

IN TURNING to the real enemies of "beauty and meaning" in popular music, Bayles, surprisingly, finds the prime culprits in highbrow intellectual movements whose pernicious effects have trickled down through journalism and the universities. In her view, it is various forms of high musical modernism that have drained the life out of contemporary popular music, replacing it with desiccated self-indulgence or, worse, mean-spirited ugliness and perversity for its own sake.

Bayles divides modernism into three categories: "introverted," "perverse," and "extroverted." By introverted modernism, she means the tradition of self-consciously pure intellectualism she associates with early-20th-century composers like Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and their twelve-tone followers. The involuted rigor of their music was intended as an earnest of an almost religious devotion to the purity of music; but for Bayles, it is death when music is severed from communal participation and a common language of expressiveness.

Though the influence of this brand of modernism on popular music is tenuous, it can be seen on the periphery of the rock avant-garde in figures like the late Frank Zappa, John Cale and the Velvet Underground, and "industrial-music" groups like Throbbing Gristle. Some of these, in turn, influenced certain "punk" and "new-wave" groups of the late 1970's and early 1980's.

Morally more decadent, and also more pervasive in its influence, is Bayles's second category, perverse modernism. This draws on the long aesthetic counter-tradition of shocking the bourgeoisie, and links up with political radicalism in attempting to shake

DANIEL J. SILVER *reviewed* The Promise of Pragmatism *by John Patrick Diggins in last month's issue.*

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foundations of cultural expression in order to promote anarchy. Bayles draws a more or less straight line from today's "punk" and "grunge" rock back to such shock artists of the 1920's and 30's as the Italian Futurists and various Dadaist promoters of "happenings."

Finally, there is extroverted modernism, the only kind with any saving graces, because it aims to include a broad variety of listeners in a community of appreciation. In popular music, the quintessential medium of extroverted modernism, according to Bayles, is jazz—a richly layered expressive form that incorporates and pays tribute to the whole gamut of Afro-American genres while being open to new influences.

Bayles concedes that jazz is not for everyone, that it only becomes readily accessible after one has learned its "language." But from the giants of swing like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, to the jaggedly experimental "beboppers" Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, and on to avant-gardists like John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, the defining element of jazz is that it does not disdain popularity.

The tradition of jazz has had a salutary impact on such latter-day phenomena as rhythm-and-blues and soul music, and can be heard in the Motown sound and the Philly sound (Marvin Gaye, Otis Redding, Smokey Robinson, *et al.*). But these are also the forms of popular music most grievously under assault by the uglier, soul-killing sounds that dominate the airwaves today. In the battle of modernisms, the bad has won out over the good.

THERE is, certainly, something compelling about Bayles's taxonomy of contemporary popular music, but it is hardly without problems. For one thing, she suffers from a malady, common among many culture critics, of tending to view cultural influence from a top-down perspective. For all her emphasis on the popularity of popular music as a form of communal bonding, Bayles pays far too much attention to intellectuals.

Interpreting all of jazz, for instance, as a type of modernism—a movement often associated with difficulty and hermeticism in the arts—exposes the strain in her effort to win a kind of intellectual respectability for aspects of the black idiom. And this suggests that she is not quite comfortable with the other, main part of her thesis: that good popular music deserves respect *because* it is popular.

Another major problem with Bayles's conception of the Afro-American idiom is that she cannot decide whether it is to be appreciated primarily for its aesthetic virtues or for certain sociological and moral values related to the history of black oppression out of which it developed.

This music—nurtured first in slavery, growing to maturity within a still very segregated America—has a compelling humanity that cannot be denied. Yet to make it bear the weight of social and historical meaning wherever it goes and however it changes is to confuse historical with artistic significance. Bayles's reading is less debasing, to be sure, than the primitivist reading of black music she properly criticizes. But her views are more akin to such sociopolitical gestures than she may recognize.

So, too, there is something troubling in the way Bayles insistently checks the traditionalist *bona fides* of latter-day popular music, as if any merit it may possess depends on its having an assured pedigree, on its descent from a "genuine" black idiom.

One problem with this is that, as Bayles herself acknowledges, the Afro-American tradition is notable not for its purity but rather for its creative absorption of anything new it encounters. But even more disturbing is that Bayles comes perilously close here to a politics of cultural and racial "identity" of the kind that elsewhere she explicitly repudiates. To say it again, black music is worth preserving not just for its heritage but because it is good music—giving pleasure through its artistry—and because it speaks to a common sensibility that cuts across national, cultural, religious, and racial lines.

Still, despite some theoretical shakiness, this is a spirited and enlightening book. Writing in a crisp journalistic style, Bayles advances her sometimes subtle arguments in a highly readable and generally unpretentious manner—despite occasional traces of vulgarity or tendentiousness. Along the way she provides an entertaining cultural history, full of many flashes of offbeat insight.

Anyone with a taste for the lively, heart-warming, and at times heart-rending music she values will be especially responsive to Bayles's *cri de coeur* about the devastated landscape of today. If her intellectual claims are too large or too fuzzy, the issues she raises are well worth considering—and she articulates them in a sane, brave, and humane voice.

Culture War

BEFORE THE SHOOTING BEGINS. By JAMES DAVISON HUNTER. *Free Press. 310 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL CASSE

JAMES DAVISON HUNTER has written a temperate book about the volatile subject of abortion—more precisely, about the debate that has swirled around our abortion laws for more than two decades.

No one could be unfamiliar with this debate. Abortion has become the preeminent "single issue" of our time. It divides the Republican party, and even alienates many pro-life Democrats from their President. Every candidate for national office must have a stated position on the issue.

In recent sessions of Congress, the most vigorously fought legislative battles have occurred over the relatively narrow questions of whether doctors in federally-supported clinics can make abortion referrals and whether taxpayer dollars should be used to support fetal-tissue research. Senate hearings on appointments to the Supreme Court have been devoted to divining a nominee's position on *Roe* v. *Wade*. This year, the President's

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health-care proposal, involving hundreds of billions of dollars in countless areas of American life, may stand or fall on the question of whether abortion should be included in a set of government-defined standard-insurance benefits.

Hunter observes all this with dismay. A sociologist at the University of Virginia, he is the author of an earlier book, *Culture Wars*, that examined an array of conflicts, from multiculturalism to censorship, to describe national divisions over social and moral issues. But it is the debate over abortion that he believes most critically tests our ability to mediate disputes "in a manner that is in keeping with the ideals set forth in the founding documents of the American republic." Is it possible, this book asks, to talk about that issue without letting the conversation degenerate into acrimonious and intensely personal exchanges?

THE evidence Hunter assembles is not encouraging. He begins by looking at what he calls the "special-agenda" organizations: those (mostly) national groups that are devoted to advancing either the pro-life or the pro-choice position. In interviews with representatives of Operation Rescue, Planned Parenthood, the National Organization for Women, the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, the American Life League, and a handful of others, Hunter shows a debate reduced to sheer sloganeering.

The coat hanger and the fetus are not merely ghoulish symbols of these embattled factions, they have become the essence of their argument. In a remarkable ten-page "glossary of rhetorical distortions," Hunter juxtaposes quotations from pro-life and pro-choice literature: frenzied, hackneyed accusations peppered with references to "fundamental rights" or "innocent human life." The debate is dead serious, of course, but the level of sophistication is appallingly superficial.

In Hunter's view, the problem is compounded by the low state of public-opinion surveys. This point is important because, as he reminds us, public opinion is consistently used as the ultimate evidence to support one argument or another regarding abortion laws. Yet most opinion surveys are intrinsically misleading, taking a complex, difficult moral problem on which individuals often have a full range of sentiments and reducing it to a single, sound-bite-sized question on whether abortion is murder.

Hunter pays particular attention to a survey conducted by the Gallup Organization in 1990, one of the few to examine American opinion about abortion in great detail. The results reveal a public that is far more ambivalent about abortion—and far more worried about it—than most news reports would have us believe.

Thus, 42 percent of Americans identify themselves as strongly or moderately pro-life, while 33 percent are strongly or moderately pro-choice. But scrutiny of these numbers shows that Americans, rather than fitting neatly into pro-life or pro-choice camps, are dispersed across a spectrum of moral opinion. Within that spectrum, there is clearly a high level of public discomfort with unrestricted access to abortion in nearly every circumstance.

A number of provocative statistics emerge from this study: 49 percent of Americans believe abortion is murder, while another 28 percent believe that it does involve the taking of a human life; women are more likely to be pro-life than pro-choice (by 43 to 33 percent); half of Americans believe that already at the instant of conception a child's right to be born outweighs a woman's right to choose whether to have the child. Moreover, fewer than 30 percent of Americans believe a woman's poor financial circumstances make abortion acceptable; fewer than 20 percent approve of it as a means of terminating a pregnancy that would otherwise interrupt a woman's career; and only a fraction views abortion as acceptable when used as a repeated means of birth control.

In short, the consistent impression conveyed by these figures is

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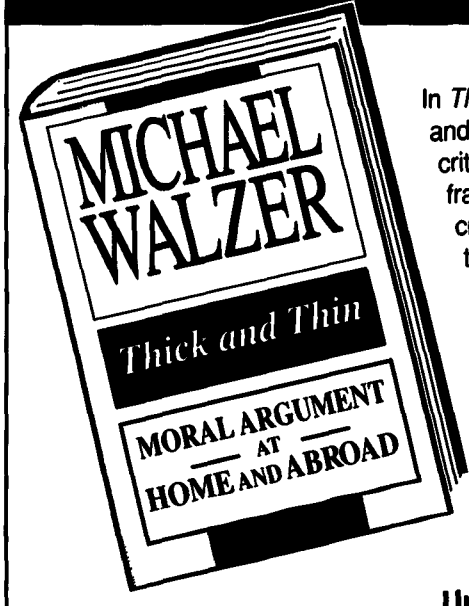
Thick and Thin



In *Thick and Thin* Michael Walzer revises and extends his arguments in the critically acclaimed *Spheres of Justice*, framing his ideas about justice, social criticism, and national identity in light of the new political world that has arisen in the past decade.

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that Americans cannot be comfortable with the idea of 1.5 million abortions now being performed each year. But neither can they be satisfied with the now-routine Marches on Washington that have become a grotesque caricature of real national sentiment.

HUNTER believes that democratic self-government demands a more enlightened, engaged, and public-spirited conversation. The final third of his book is devoted to exploring how such a conversation might emerge. As he points out, it will not be easy, if only because the critical civic institutions that might educate the public and raise the level of discussion are themselves largely responsible for its current superficiality. The press, in particular, seems wedded to promoting the conflict as a struggle for power between two zealous factions (even while subliminally and often not so subliminally pushing the pro-choice position).

Academics do not bring any greater enlightenment to the subject. Hunter cites the 281 historians who signed a misleading and inaccurate *amicus* brief promoting a pro-choice legal argument in the 1989 *Webster* Supreme Court case. "The problem here," writes Hunter, was "not just flawed history, but a history understood to be flawed in service of a political agenda." Then there is Laurence Tribe of the Harvard Law School, who thinks that another *amicus* brief, signed by 885 law professors supporting *Roe* v. *Wade*, constitutes proof that the decision was sound jurisprudence.

Hunter believes such partisanship erodes democratic ideals, and argues that the search for a more "substantive democracy" must begin by overcoming the temptation to find political solutions to what is fundamentally a cultural problem. He cites a few (but not too many) examples of communities across the country where differences over abortion have been partially bridged by genuine efforts at public persuasion and serious argument.

There is something undoubtedly appealing about Hunter's proposal; the idea of communities peacefully navigating the shoals of the abortion controversy is certainly preferable to the menacing confrontations that now occur outside abortion clinics. But his argument is not entirely persuasive.

Recent shifts toward limited state restrictions on abortion (including parental-notification requirements or 24-hour waiting periods) are largely a result not of community-wide discussions but of political decisions by state legislatures wishing to retreat from the regime of unrestricted access to abortion. Similarly, within the Republican party, there has been much political jockeying on this issue. At a national Right to Life conference last year, William J. Bennett urged the pro-life movement to

> be inclusive, to welcome into your ranks people who agree with you all of the time, half of the time, a third of the time. Embrace those who have deep concerns about the massive number of abortions even if they are not fully committed to the pro-life agenda.

If heeded, such advice might well lead toward a more substantive consideration of abortion law. So far, however, the discussion has been conducted almost wholly on tactical or political grounds, not on moral or ethical ones.

WHY should this be so? Hunter does not sufficiently consider the most obvious answer: in addition to striking down most state abortion laws in 1973, the Supreme Court's *Roe* decision effectively took the issue away from elected local legislatures and reposed it in the undemocratic branch of the federal government. Since then, virtually all of our major abortion laws have been decided through secret deliberations among Supreme Court Justices.

Until elected legislatures are free to debate and craft their own rules regarding the practice of abortion without incessant constitutional challenge, the type of sustained and vigorous discussions that Hunter seeks will be nearly impossible to achieve. This is not to argue simply for "states' rights" (which is problematic for those who believe that the right to life is enshrined in the Constitution), but to recognize the fact that the federal judiciary and the federal Congress today dominate local decision-making on a wide spectrum of cultural issues, from abortion to school prayer. What is needed is not just a depoliticization of these issues, as Hunter suggests, but a radical shift of political power back to local, and in some cases nongovernmental, authorities. That shift requires an intensely political campaign that has yet to materialize.

But even if a more probing conversation on abortion were to replace the angry diatribes we now hear, it is not at all clear that Hunter's prescriptions would bring greater harmony. The Lincoln-Douglas debates, perhaps the most thoughtful moral dialogue this country has ever heard, did nothing to prevent a civil war. As a newly sworn-in President, Lincoln used his first inaugural address to persuade the South to accept a peaceful union: "We are not enemies, but friends," he concluded. "Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection." Six weeks later, he was at war with the Confederacy.

Today, thankfully, we are nowhere near a civil war on abortion. Most Americans, in fact, do not even want to talk about the issue, much less enter a probing, ethically-charged dialogue about it. What Hunter does not sufficiently appreciate is that the kind of searching debate he would like to see would necessarily raise uncomfortable questions which Americans are not in the mood to confront. Despite all the evidence Hunter arrays to show how deeply ambivalent the country is, and how dissatisfying the current debate remains, nowhere do we see a popular stampede for a more engaged discussion. That may reflect the current weakness of our democracy, or it may reflect a strength; in any case, it is a truth that anyone who wants to see more debate—even reasoned debate—on abortion will have to consider.

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The Liberal

THE NEW YORK IDEA: AN EXPERIMENT IN DEMOCRACY. By MARIO CUOMO. *Crown. 286 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by RICHARD BROOKHISER

For most of this century, New York State has been an incubator of nationally prominent liberal politicians. As liberalism has changed, so have the politicians: Senator Robert F. Kennedy did not have a lot in common with Governor Charles Evans Hughes, although each in his own day was a recognized leader in the "progressive" wing of his party. The latest in this series is Mario Cuomo, governor for twelve years and a national figure for ten. The governor is running for a fourth term, which, if he wins it, will surely be his last; so it is appropriate to consider how the state has fared under his stewardship, and how liberalism has profited from his advocacy.

The New York Idea, the governor's fifth book, might seem like a good place to look for answers. Unfortunately, the book is a collage, assembled from bits of position papers and old speeches. The former are tedious. The latter are as battered and dented as pieces of furniture that have been through many moves.

Let us, then, do a bit of historical reconstruction instead. Mario Cuomo became governor of New York in 1982, after upsetting New York City mayor Edward Koch in the Democratic primary, and edging Lewis Lehrman, a rich and intelligent Republican, in the general election. But since Koch was widely thought to have beaten himself—*Playboy* published an interview with him on the eve of the primary in which he spoke of upstate New Yorkers and their "Sears Roebuck suits"—while Lehrman was a businessman with no political experience, Cuomo's victories in that race did not make him a national figure. That came two years later, with his keynote speech to the 1984 Democratic convention in San Francisco.

To a party that was about to send forth Walter Mondale to challenge Ronald Reagan at the height of his popularity, Cuomo gave badly needed uplift. The core of his speech was standard Democratic fare: a rhetoric of pity and envy designed to highlight and to rally society's outcasts (and to make as many people as possible feel that they were among those cast out). But Cuomo's alternative ideal—of America as a family—was new.

Family values had been a sore spot for the Democratic party since the emergence of social conservatives in the late 70's. Cuomo appropriated the idea of the family by expanding it to the size of the country. "Republicans," he said, "believe that the wagon train will not make it to the frontier unless . . . the weak are left behind by the side of the trail." Democrats, by contrast, believe "that we can make it all the way with the whole family intact."

Cuomo lit his political argument with a glow of moral seriousness. He defined Republicans as Darwinians, who believed in "taking care of the strong and hop[ing] that economic ambition and charity will do the rest," while Democrats believed that "a government of humans should elevate itself to a higher order" and "would rather have laws written by . . . the man called the 'world's most sincere Democrat,' St. Francis of Assisi, than laws written by Darwin."

Add to this that the speech was delivered in an urgent, plaintive tenor voice, which maintained the momentum of its phrasing through the witless bursts of applause that derail most convention speakers, and it is easy to see why the Democrats, and the press, labeled it a triumph. Though the Democrats lost the 1984 campaign, Mario Cuomo was a winner.

Cuomo's record over the next ten years can only be understood when it is put in context—indeed, in several contexts. One was the changed nature of liberalism in New York State. The long reign of the liberal Republican Nelson Rockefeller, from 1958 to 1974, had seen a quantum rise in the number of tasks the state government took on, the amount of money it spent, and the taxes it raised. "I like you, Nelson," Rockefeller's Republican predecessor, Thomas Dewey, once said, "but I don't think I can afford you." The Rockefeller years—both an anticipation and a parallel of the New Frontier and the Great Society—transformed the expectations of state legislators, constituent groups, and local pundits.

Cuomo has done what he could to extend this pattern. Since he took office, state-funded spending has increased by more than twice the rate of inflation. State spending per capita in New York is 47-percent higher than the national average. Throughout the Reagan boom of the mid-80's, this spending was sustained by tax revenues stimulated by the very policies Cuomo had flailed in San Francisco.

When the Bush recession hit at the end of the decade and revenues declined, the state was obliged to fall back on a variety of financial expedients: raiding dedicated accounts, such as insurance and retirement funds, to cover general-operating expenses; selling state properties to off-budget public authorities; converting short-term debt into long-term bonds.

Lately, this impulse has been modified by the second context within which Cuomo has had to operate: the sense, growing since the mid-70's, that government had taken on too much. Conservative Republicans, who had believed this all along, embraced the idea of tax revolt at decade's end, but even some Democrats—called "neoliberals" at the time—briefly spoke of an "age of limits."

In *The New York Idea*, Cuomo boasts that he has returned some of the state's largesse to taxpayers in the form of tax cuts. Another Democrat, Hugh Carey, governor from 1974 to 1982, had begun to whittle away at a top state-income-tax rate of over 15 percent bequeathed by Rockefeller. Under Mario Cuomo, the top rate has sunk to just under 7.9 percent. But what Cuomo does not report in his

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book is that each of his cuts was made at the insistence of the legislature; he apologized for signing the last one in 1987 by saying that "they would have gotten it anyway."

In addition, Cuomo has deferred a scheduled cut that was to have taken the top tax rate down still further, to 7 percent, at the same time that he has raised an array of fees and sin taxes. (Not every proposed tax hike has become law: a snack tax, dubbed the "doughnut tax," died aborning.) Even the steps he has grudgingly taken have earned him the suspicion of what might be called the *Village Voice* Left. In election years, they hold their noses and back the governor. But in between, they grumble that any tax cut is a sellout.

This brings us to the third context of the last decade: the critique, by George Gilder, Charles Murray, and many others, not just of the price tag of liberal social politics but of the corrosive consequences of the policies themselves, particularly those of the welfare and education bureaucracies. Though Cuomo makes noises from time to time to show that he is aware of this critique, he has engaged it less than the two other contexts with which he has had to deal, perhaps because doing so would require thinking along new lines, rather than juggling budget and tax numbers. As a result, the family of New York seems to be no better off than it would be under the policies of Darwin.

The state's record in public education is emblematic. New York spends $9,665 per pupil—half again as much as the national average of $6,392. But the SAT scores of New York high-school students have been falling against the national average for twenty years, and New York ranks 45th in its graduation rate.

Cuomo did not create all these trends, but he has not improved them. Meanwhile, he resists any effort to think hard about the problem of diminishing educational returns. His prescription for reform is, the same again, please, only better.

THE exhausted, by-the-numbers quality of *The New York Idea* turns out to be a good, if unwitting, reflection of Cuomo's accomplishments. He did not invent big government in New York, but while he and the permanent majorities in the state legislature—Republicans in the Senate and Democrats in the Assembly—may disagree from time to time on taxes, they are all wedded to big spending and to the benefits that flow therefrom to constituents and to themselves. What he has contributed to this process is the ability to invest it with a gloss of idealism.

In the *Diaries of Mario M. Cuomo*, a journal of the 1982 campaign and a much better book than *The New York Idea*, he described an argument with his mother over the death penalty, which he opposes. Mrs. Cuomo disagreed with her son, and she also thought his position would cause him to lose the governor's race. Finally, he quotes her as saying:

> "You don't have to loosa. You listen to me! You tell thema you changea you mind, you wanna the electric chair. Then, after you win . . ." And here she made an ancient Italian gesture, flicking the bottom of the chin, with two fingers . . . saying in effect, "After the election, to h— with them!"

Mrs. Cuomo was a shrewd woman. But where her son surpassed her in shrewdness was in recognizing the value that New Yorkers place on a certain species of "idealistic" cant.

That value is not infinite, however. Cuomo's approval ratings are perilously low for an incumbent. True, he may be saved by his enemies. In 1990, the Republicans ran a political novice so incompetent he barely finished in second place. This year, amid much feuding among party kingpins, the GOP picked a candidate hardly better known, albeit much more intelligent. If, as certainly seems possible, Mario Cuomo wins a fourth term, New York can look forward to the same again—only the same.

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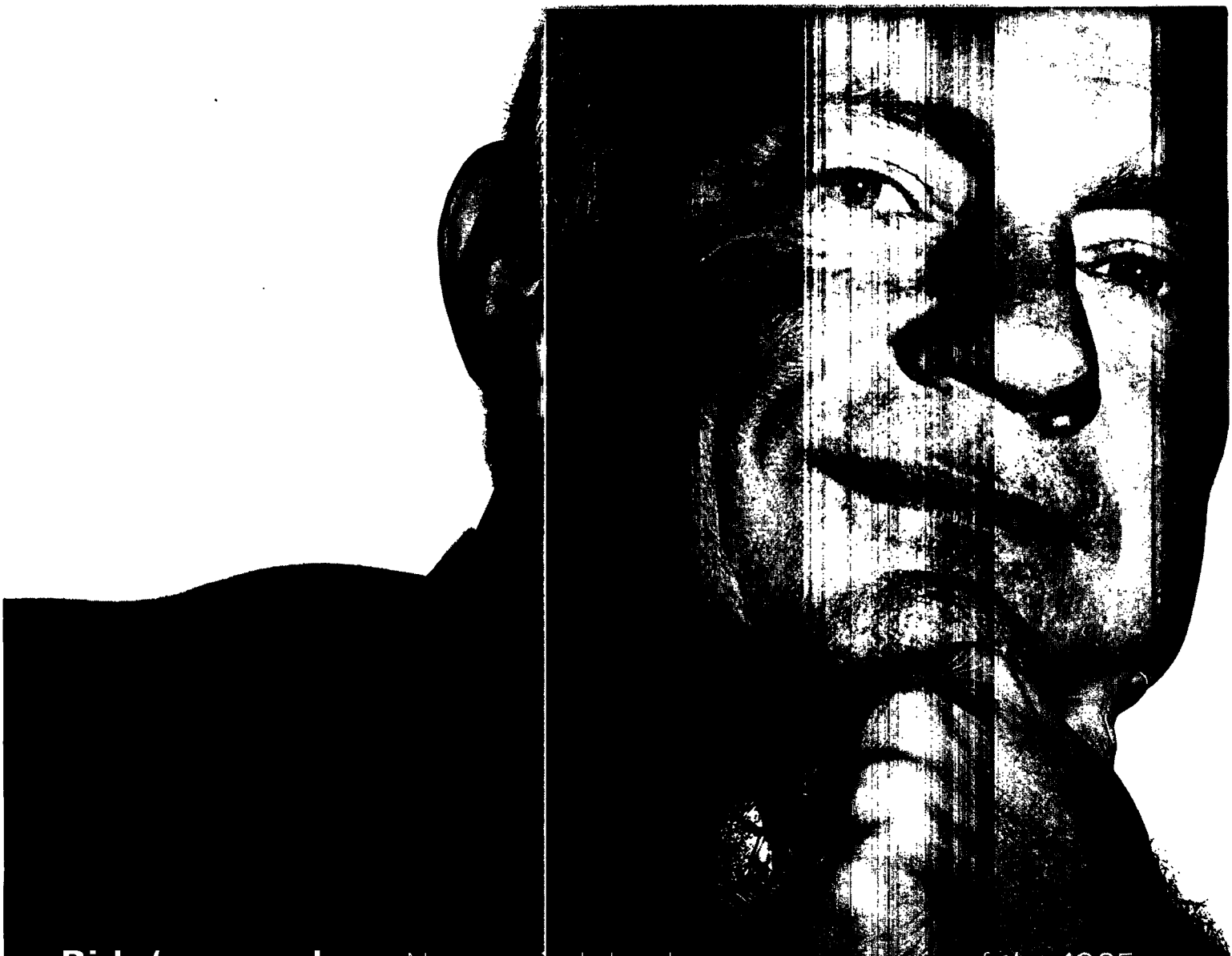

Ride 'em cowboy. Never mind that he was co-captain of the 1965 national championship University of Arkansas football team. Never mind that he made millions in the oil and gas business when others were getting out. Never mind that he risked every penny on a money losing NFL franchise. Never mind that he turned it into the world's most valuable sports property in just five years. Never mind that he owns two Super Bowl rings. He'd be the first to tell you. The only thing that matters is next season's 4th quarter results. **Jerry Jones**

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